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Developing Appropriate Seatwork for the Mentally Retarded.

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Meaningful and challenging seatwork, different kinds of work, minimum teacher preparation time, writing and explaining directions, evaluating student work, and organization and management are discussed. Preparatory steps for planning seatwork activities are described and consider identifying information, specification of major skills, objectives, description of activities, listing of materials needed, directions to students, and checking work. Suggested format for seatwork plans and sample seatwork activities are also presented. (LE)

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SPECIAL EDUCATION
CURRICULUM
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an in-service
training approach...

DEVELOPING APPROPRIATE

Seatwork

FOR THE MENTALLY RETARDED

A Cooperative
Program
Involving The
Iowa State
Department
Of Public Instruction
And the
University of Iowa

E002836E

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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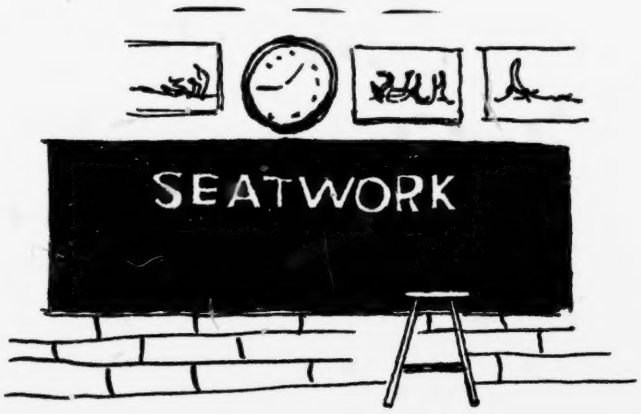

FOR THE
MENTALLY RETARDED

SECDC STAFF

Edward L. Meyen, Ph.D., Director
Sigurd B. Walden, Assistant Director
Munro Shintani, Ph.D., Coordinator
Phyllis Carter, Curriculum Specialist
Dan Burns, Media Specialist
Linda Vande Garde, Staff Assistant
LeRoy Mitchell, Graphic Artist
Michael D'Asto, Editor

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PLEASE READ!

The Special Education Curriculum Development Center has as its main objective the operation of a statewide in-service training program for teachers of the mentally retarded. Twenty special class teachers from different geographic areas of Iowa serve as consulting teachers. They attend training sessions at the University of Iowa and then return to their home area to conduct field sessions. All materials prepared for SECDC are intended for dissemination through the field sessions conducted by the consulting teachers. Persons reading SECDC material but not attending the field sessions should keep in mind that the purpose of the material is to serve as a starting point for in-service training and that the publications themselves are not end products.

It should also be noted that any reference to commercially prepared materials by the Special Education Curriculum Development Center does not constitute a recommendation or endorsement for purchase. The consideration of such material is intended solely as a means of assisting teachers and administrators in the evaluation of materials.

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PART I

INTRODUCTION

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Most publications prepared by SECDC focus on topics that teachers of the mentally retarded have indicated are areas in which they desire assistance and help. Such areas are generally characterized by a scarcity of information and materials that can be developed by teachers into specific instructional programs for the classroom.

It is the intent of this guide to suggest such an approach and to present standards by which relative merits of various seatwork can be judged Additional discussion and suggestions are offered in an attempt to help teachers find realistic solutions to some of the problems encountered when developing and organizing seatwork for mentally retarded students. Preparatory planning steps to be considered in the course of selecting specific seatwork activities are outlined, and a suggested planning format is proposed. Representative samples of seatwork activities for three levels of instruction are also presented.

It is important to *define* precisely what is meant by the term *seatwork*. To some people this term may infer those purple-colored worksheets reproduced on a "ditto" machine. While such duplicated material is one form of seatwork, it is imperative that a broader interpretation be applied.

Seatwork involves work-type activities assigned by teachers to be completed independently by the students. Appropriate seatwork entails the application of skills and concepts that have been developed in various subject areas. The independent work activity reinforces these skills, sets them in a meaningful context, emphasizes major points, and gives students opportunities to practice using these skills in learning situations.

Such work may be done at the pupil's desks, on the floor, around a table, in the back of the room, or in a corner. Activities may be completed by the students working individually or with small groups of other children. The assignments may not always involve reading, or the use of paper and pencils, or cutting and pasting. Seatwork may be done during reading and arithmetic periods, but it may also be a part of the social studies or science programs, and conceivably, even physical education instruction.

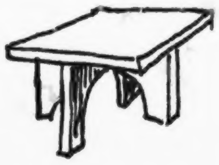
When approaching the task of developing or selecting seatwork for use in a classroom situation, most teachers probably begin by thinking of a particular activity that might be done independently by students. Such activities may be closely related to the instructional program, and serve to reinforce the skills and concepts being taught. On the other hand, expediency may be the deciding factor in selecting an activity, the result of which is an experience that might be of limited or questionable value. It would seem that a systematic, organized approach is needed if teachers are to consistently provide seatwork assignments that will be educationally profitable for their mentally retarded students.

It should be noted, however, that this publication does not attempt to place in the teachers' hands a large collection of seatwork activities to be used directly with students. Rather, the purpose of the document is to serve as a resource and guide to teachers as they develop their own seatwork activities.

The proposed directives for development of seatwork will require a certain amount of time and concerted effort on the part of the special class teacher. If teachers are willing to make such an investment, several benefits can accrue. Organizing, sequencing, and evaluating seatwork may stimulate planning relative to overall sequencing of content and clarification of skills and concepts being taught. By systematically recording seatwork suggestions, ideas can be shared and utilized by colleagues. But perhaps the greatest benefit--gained from a greater sophistication in planning and evaluating this aspect of the curriculum -- will be realized by the mentally retarded students who are in special education classes.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING SEATWORK

In considering the general topic of seatwork, attention should first be directed toward a discussion of those characteristics which distinguish appropriate seatwork from activities of less than desired value. Sugh a background can provide teachers with some basis for judging the relative merits of various kinds of independent activities. Consider these two examples:



1) A duplicated worksheet which consists of a series of questions to be answered by drawing a circle around the words *Yes* or *No*. The printing is small, blurred, and hard to read. The vocabulary used is inconsistent with the controlled word list presented in the students' reading texts. There are no directions given on the worksheet; the teacher explains it at the beginning of the period. She directs the students to color the pictures when they finish reading the sentences.
2) A tape recording of a "Listen and Do" activity. Children are directed to listen to the directions on the tape, then draw a series of pictures about their school on a large sheet of newsprint. Students are told to replay the tape and listen individually if they need to verify the directions.

The second of these activities is more beneficial than the first. It engages the students in an activity which holds more meaning for them, is more challenging, is representative of a sequentially planned series of activities, and provides a certain element of enjoyment and variety.

The second activity requires considerably more teacher time to prepare than the other, but the students are able to complete it in a matter of minutes. Directions to the students explaining how to do the assignment are an integral part of one activity; no provisions for student directions are made in the other.

Seatwork activities that are appropriate for use with mentally retarded students *reinforce skills* or *concepts* that have been *previously taught*. The activities are *functional* in nature, requiring students to use skills or concepts in situations which are as close as possible to *real life experiences*. Students must be able to complete the work *independently*, with a *minimum* of teacher direction or supervision. They should understand the *purpose* of the seatwork, and see some reason for doing it. The independent activities assigned over a period of time should follow a *systematic, sequential plan*. The activities should be *thought-provoking* and require the students to apply *problem solving methods* as they complete the assignment. Seatwork should contribute to the *development* of *good work habits* and should result in some measure of *personal satisfaction* for the learner. Activities should be interesting and varied, and materials should be *reasonably attractive*.

In addition, practical considerations must be met. For instance, activities should require a *minimum* of *preparation time* by the teacher, yet meaningfully involve the students in independent work for a sufficient period of time. If other instruction is taking place in the classroom, the activity must be something which can be done with a minimum of distraction.

The simple worksheet described above in the first example obviously does not meet many of these stated criteria. But not all worksheets are of such dubious value; some worksheet activities, in fact, make a definite contribution to the educational experiences of special class students. In order to develop appropriate seatwork, then, we must examine and structure a set of basic criteria for seatwork evaluation.

1. *Meaningful Seatwork*

One of the most important qualifications to be met if seatwork activities are to provide a real learning experience for the students is provision for reinforcement of *relevant skills* and *concepts.* An example of a reading activity to reinforce the skill of arranging things in proper sequence would be one in which students are directed to copy a group of sentences from the chalkboard, listing them in the order in which they happened in the story. The same skill can be reinforced by having pupils arrange a series of pictures in the right sequence and pasting them in that order. In a transportation unit, various map reading skills may be introduced. An example of a seatwork activity to reinforce the skill of computing mileage using a road map would be to have pupils figure out and compare distances between certain cities or highway junctions.

Care must be taken that the skills and concepts chosen for emphasis be representative of those things considered to be the most important in the school curriculum. It may be an unwise expenditure of effort to spend time on a relatively minor phonics rule in reading, for example, if the students display a need for improved comprehension skills.

Seatwork activities chosen to reinforce major skills and concepts should be as *functional* as possible. That is to say, activities should involve situations which are as realistic as possible, in which skills will be used as closely as is feasible to the way people will be required to use the skill in everyday life. This is a particularly important consideration to keep in mind when planning materials for mentally retarded students. Because of the nature of their handicap, they experience difficulty in transferring concepts learned in one situation to others and applying them meaningfully.

Planning activities that are functional is not an easy task, however. First of all, activities must be of such a nature that they can be completed in a classroom setting. This immediately restricts the range of possibilities. A further factor is that seatwork has traditionally involved activities that are primarily academic. Materials for use in regular education are, by and large, drill oriented, stressing the development of skills *per se*. Major emphasis is usually not placed on practical application of these skills. Because many special education teachers come to this field via the classroom, they have a tendency to view seatwork in the same light as they perceived it for normal children. And since specially designed materials for mentally retarded students are limited, teachers must often rely on the available supply of prepared items for general education. It must also be admitted that designing activities of an academic nature is easier than developing

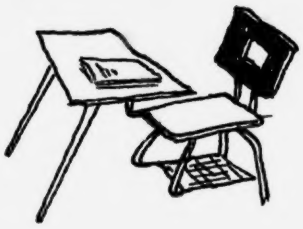
realistic, functional experiences. A page of arithmetic facts can be copied onto a worksheet master quickly. It takes more time and thought to develop a series of exercises comparing costs of merchandise advertised in newspaper ads.

These difficulties not withstanding, special class teachers should strive to develop seatwork that will give their students opportunities to practice using skills in meaningful ways. Once a specific skill has been delineated for reinforcement in the seatwork planning process, teachers should ask themselves, "How do people use this skill in everyday life? How do I use this skill outside the classroom?" An activity which approximates such situations should then be devised. Such considerations will also help the teacher determine what skills and concepts are most germane to the curriculum for mentally retarded. If a skill is not functional -- if people do not have occasion to use it in everyday situations -- it may be questionable to include it in the instructional program.

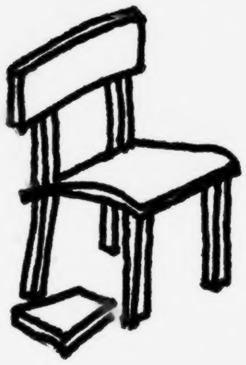
It is also imperative that the planning for the reinforcement of skills be done in an *organized and systematic way*. If a consistent approach is followed, the independent work period can be more than a time "to keep the kids busy." Rather, it can be used to real advantage in providing meaningful learning experiences for the pupils. Directives for such a planning approach are suggested in Part II of this publication.

In addition to reinforcing relevant skills and concepts, meaningful seatwork must involve situations which relate closely to the *experiental backgrounds* of the students. When using some commercially prepared worksheets, for example, care must be taken that the pictures shown are things the children are familiar with. A child from a rural area of Iowa might have a difficult time identifying a moose or a street vendor.

Another aspect of planning for meaningful seatwork should be specific consideration of how to communicate to the pupils the *intent* of the activity. This is often overlooked by teachers, yet if work-type activities are to be profitable, students should understand why they are doing the assignment. For example, an arithmetic worksheet which directs pupils to indicate with arrows how to do various combinations on padlocks should be explained, now only in terms of what students are to do, but also why they are doing it. A discussion should bring out that the worksheet is being assigned to provide additional practice in reading a lock combination correctly. Suggestions for specific planning of this aspect of seatwork are also included in the directives in Part II of the document.



Students will perceive independent assignments as being relevant and important if these criteria for developing meaningful seatwork are met. Another factor, however, which may influence the way pupils view such assignments is the *teacher's attitude*. If she thinks seatwork is a vital part of the educational program, her enthusiasm will be contagious. If, on the other hand, she views it only as a necessary evil, this attitude will be communicated to the students even though it may never be expressed in words.



2. *Challenging Seatwork*

Seatwork, if it is to be a real learning experience, should engage the students in an activity where they must use constructive thinking to solve a problem or arrive at a conclusion.

It is particularly important to provide mentally retarded students with opportunities for the development and use of logical problem-solving methods. Because these skills may prove to be rather difficult for them, it is important to concentrate on an instructional program which provides training in approaching problems with a consistent mode of attack, leading to some solution of the problem.

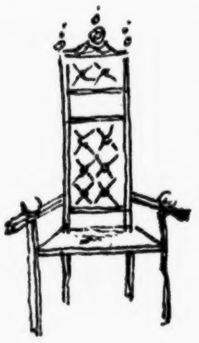
The assigning of seatwork activities can provide an excellent springboard for discussions of the various steps involved in problem solving. For example, students can be encouraged to consider the following kinds of questions in terms of specific seatwork exercises:

1. *What is the problem; what am I supposed to do?*
2. *What do I need to know in order to do the assignment (solve the problem)?*
3. *Where can I go for help if I need it? (What sources are available?)*
4. *Am I able to do the assignment right? (Did I solve the problem satisfactorily?)*

The incorporation of these questions can be handled when directives for an assignment are given and discussed. Specific suggestions for teachers are included in Part II of the publication.

If seatwork activities are to be used to train students in logical problem solving, then they must be of a challenging nature. An assignment which involves only the coloring of duplicated pictures does not require much thinking on the students' part. A better activity would be to draw a picture of something that makes a person feel happy and write a sentence about the picture. Here the students must decide on an appropriate picture to draw, formulate a descriptive sentence and determine the proper spelling of words.

It is imperative that teachers be very aware of the capabilities of the pupils in their classes as they plan for seatwork. Activities should present a challenge to them, yet must not be so difficult that they are not able to solve the problem. Decisions concerning the level of difficulty of any assignment must be made relative to the children who will be doing the work.



3. *Different Types of Seatwork Needed*

Students must be able to do seatwork activities independently, with a minimum of teacher supervision. Yet it is often quite difficult to devise activities for mentally retarded students that they can complete without any help. This is especially true for young primary-age children, students who are performing at a low academic level, or students who have physical handicaps of some nature. Different types of seatwork are needed to meet the needs and abilities of these students.

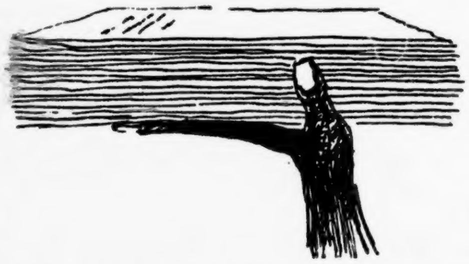
The chronological ages represented in different special classes will affect the kinds of seatwork to be planned. A primary level teacher will have to prepare activities that are very different from those planned by a senior high instructor. In general, primary age mentally retarded children have acquired few of the skills necessary for independent work. They are at a readiness level in reading, writing skills are limited, and their attention span is short. They can, however, express themselves

in drawings, have some degree of skill in manipulating scissors, and can collect and classify objects. Examples of some kinds of activities they can do are drawing pictures involving classifications: "Things I Like," "How I Feel," "What I Do at Home to Help."

Finding and cutting pictures from old magazines provides another type of activity, the children being directed to look for "Things That are Blue," "Things to Ride," etc. The pictures may either be pasted onto a piece of paper or organized in series of envelopes. Cutting and pasting matching shapes, forms, and pictures can be done, as well as making games such as dominoes or lotto cards. When some reading vocabulary has been introduced, children can draw pictures of the words (including verbs and adjectives as well as nouns), and print the word under the picture.
In addition, various types of nonconsumable seatwork can be employed. Putting together different kinds of puzzles, tracing stencils or templates, and sequencing number cards are examples of these kinds of activities.

It may not be possible to plan a sufficient amount of seatwork to engage primary-age children in independent activities for an entire reading or arithmetic period. There should be a set procedure for children to follow when they have completed an assignment. A list of things they can do should be discussed: playing with games and toys at their seats, painting at the easel, looking at library books, drawing pictures, working with objects and materials in interest centers, or playing with clay. Time should be spent discussing where materials to be used are kept, rules to follow when playing with toys (e.g., *play quietly and in such a manner that other people are not disturbed)*, proper use of art supplies, and so forth.

Students in intermediate and advanced levels, in general, have sufficient skills for the more traditional "paper and pencil" types of seatwork. The major problems at these levels are usually the students who vary considerably from the rest of the group in terms of reading ability, ability to follow directions, or physical capabilties. It will be necessary to modify seatwork assignments for these students to take into account their needs and abilities.



Modification can be accomplished in several ways. Students may be directed to complete a minimum portion of an assignment--to copy five out of ten sentences, for instance. If they have time, they are to do all of the work. This can be an effective way to handle pupils who work very slowly.

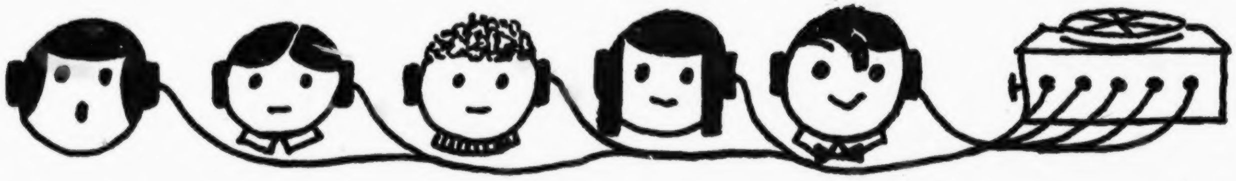
Different levels of response for an activity may be devised to accommodate physical limitations or differences in ability. For example, students may be directed to find pictures of various articles of clothing in magazines, cut them out, and paste them onto paper. Some pupils would be instructed to do only this much; others would be directed to write the name of the article under each picture. If for physical reasons a child cannot use scissors, he could be directed to tear out the pictures rather than cutting them. In some instances it may be necessary to devise separate seatwork activities for one child. This should be done only in extreme instances, however. Both for expediency and for the sake of the individual child, it is advantageous to include him in a group assignment, modifying it as necessary to meet his needs.

The various levels of instruction represented by different groupings in subjects such as reading and arithmetic will necessitate the preparation of different seatwork activities for each group.

Because the skills, concepts, and vocabulary being developed with each group is different, the seatwork assignments to reinforce these skills must be geared to the level of performance at which each group is functioning. This often proves to be one of the most frustrating aspects of seatwork preparation for special class teachers.

In attempting to meet the needs of all students and to individualize instruction as much as possible, many teachers divide their classes into four or five reading groups, and perhaps as many arithmetic groups. This means that a teacher, if she utilizes seatwork correctly, would have to prepare and assign as many as ten different seatwork activities in just one day. Obviously, it is impossible for a teacher to actually do this and still have time left for other planning or teaching. Unfortunately, many teachers try to solve this dilemma by compromising on the quality or appropriateness of seatwork that is used.

Perhaps what is needed is a serious consideration of the entire practice of grouping in special classes. Grouping is employed to more adequately meet the needs of individual students and to provide them instruction and help geared to their capabilities. Yet if a teacher has five reading groups, is she really giving each student much individual attention? With this number of groups in a class, the student will spend only one-fifth of the instructional period working directly with the teacher, while he spends four-fifths of his time doing work which is not directly guided or supervised. This would seem to be a disproportionate amount of time spent in independent work.



Teachers should seriously question the effectiveness of their instruction if they try to divide their classes into more than three groups. While the motives for additional grouping are commendable, in reality teachers create *frustrating, impractical teaching situations for themselves* and *less than desirable learning experiences* for the students. By keeping the number of groups to two or three, teachers will be able to do a much better job of teaching. Each student will have a larger percentage of time devoted to teacher directed instruction. Teachers can adequately plan for two or three different seatwork activities, whereas four or five becomes overwhelming. And because the number of preparations are decreased, teachers can spend more time on planning and organizing instructional procedures.

Limiting the number of groups does not mean that individual differences are ignored. It is merely an attempt to realistically view how fifteen or more students can be taught by one teacher most effectively. It should also be borne in mind that the subjects for which students are grouped constitute only a part of the total curriculum. Through the utilization of life experience units, wide ranges of abilities and interests can be accommodated. For example, in reading an experience chart which has been developed cooperatively by the entire class, the more proficient readers may be able to read all or part of the chart independently. But even a non-reader, if given broad enough clues, may be able to figure out or recall enough of the words to feel some satisfaction of reading. Such opportunities should be planned and used to advantage whenever possible.

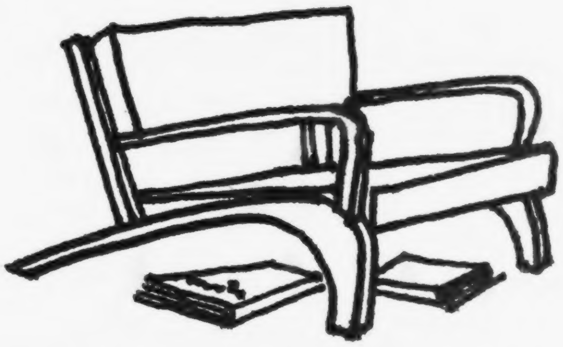
4. Seatwork for Different Subject Matter Areas

It should be kept in mind that seatwork can and should be used in subject matter areas other than reading and arithmetic. Well designed seatwork serves to reinforce skills and concepts that have been introduced.

There are numerous kinds of activities that are appropriate for different subject matter areas. Science experiments may be recorded by drawing and labeling series of pictures. This is a good way to emphasize proper sequencing, careful observation and accurate recording. In Life Experience Units a varity of things may be used, such as murals, construction activities, organizing and labeling collections, map reading exercises, arithmetic problems which utilize the newspaper, functional reading activities using various products, and exercises involving the experience charts. Language arts skills may be reinforced by writing notes and letters, making booklets and contributing to current interest bulletin boards.

5. Sequential Seatwork

Independent activities assigned over a period of time should not be haphazard and unorganized. Rather, they should follow a systematic, sequential plan in order to provide consistent reinforcement of important skills and concepts. The sequencing of seatwork, however, is dependent upon the total instructional program being well defined and organized in a sequential manner. Unfortunately, few special education classes are characterized by such curriculum planning. Basic concepts and skills are not arranged in a logical order, with provisions for their development from the early elementary levels. In fact, there is little general agreement about what are the basic skills and concepts that should be included in educational programs for retarded students. Thus, the problem of planning seatwork is not a separate entity, but rather a part of the broader problem of total curriculum planning.



The solution for such a problem is not particularly easy or simple. Ideally, committees should be formed among special education personnel, directed by people with a high degree of leadership ability and a thorough knowledge of curriculum development and trends. Identification of basic skills and concepts and the proper placement and sequencing of these skills should be one major outcome of such committee work.

In the meantime, classroom teachers are faced with the practical problems of developing seatwork for their immediate teaching situations. In lieu of a coordinated, sequenced educational program, they must make some of these curriculum decisions themselves. Such decision-making is not a new experience for special class teachers, however. They have traditionally been forced to decide for themselves what to teach, when to teach it, and how to teach it. Perhaps what teachers should do at this point is record some of these decisions in a systematic way. That is to say, teachers should write out, in the form of specific skills and concepts, those things they teach as they progress through the school year. Such a listing can then be used by a teacher to arrange skills in a logical order and to determine the sequence in which they should be taught. If individual teachers will develop specifications for their particular levels, an excellent beginning will have been made if and when curriculum committees are formed.

While the desirability of listing and organizing skills and concepts may be evident, when this task is actually attempted it proves to be quite difficult. Many commercially prepared instructional materials fail to provide this kind of information in a consistent, quickly identifiable form. Professional literature, by and large, discusses concepts or objectives in broad general terms which give inadequate guidance to teachers with respect to specific skills, concepts or goals.

To facilitate skills specification, suggestions relative to completing this task are included in the proposed steps for seatwork development in Part II of this publication. These directives encourage teachers to identify the important skills and concepts they teach in a consistent manner, as a step in seatwork planning. This procedure can then result in the specifications that are necessary for more thorough planning of the total curriculum.

6. Variety in Seatwork

It is important to develop and select activities which have interest and appeal to students. If an assignment has a certain element of enjoyment, the students will approach the independent task with more enthusiasm and willingness. Planning seatwork which is varied and diverse will help achieve these goals.

There are several ways to provide for variety in seatwork exercises. One technique is to utilize a different media than is usually used for the assignment. For example, instead of handing out worksheets to be read, write the same information on the chalkboard. Students may then be directed to copy the sentences, write the correct word in blanks and read and follow directions. These same kinds of assignments can be prepared on transparencies and projected with an overhead projector. Other kinds of assignments can be developed and displayed on bulletin boards. Students may read and do as directed, then post their completed work on the board.

A great deal of variety can be achieved by utilizing a tape recorder in independent seatwork activities. Directions for an assignment may be recorded and played for the entire class or, through the use of headsets, small groups may be engaged in work activities. Children should be taught how to operate the recording machines so they can use them during an instructional period without direct supervision by the teacher. Because most tape recorders are quite easy to operate, even young children can learn to manipulate them.

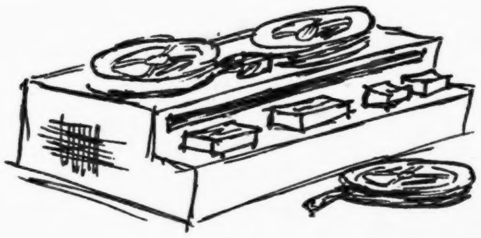
The use of individual headsets greatly facilitates the usefulness of tape recorders for seatwork purposes. Most models found in public schools can accommodate up to eight or ten headsets through the use of multiple jacks. The cost of a multiple jack is about $5.00; the headsets range from $5.00 to $25.00 per set. Information on prices and ordering procedures may be secured from an audiovisual supply house.

A recorder equipped with headsets can be placed on a table in the back of the schoolroom and can provide a variety of interesting and profitable learning experiences for retarded students. For example, children could listen to a taped story; as a check on listening comprehension they could be directed to listen to and answer a series of questions. If the children do not have adequate writing skills to answer on paper, they could respond orally and tape record their answers. The teacher can plan for individual differences by requesting, as she makes the tape, that certain children answer particular questions.

Phonetic work is well suited for taped presentations; all extraneous sounds are blocked out and the children hear only the phonetic sounds being emphasized. They may be directed to mark a worksheet as they hear the sounds, or draw a picture of something that begins with the sound, or write the words in which a particular sound is heard.

Individual book reports or reports of committees working on unit topics may be recorded on the tape recorder. These may then be played for the entire group at a later time or for the teacher when she wishes to check on progress being made by various individuals or groups.

The tape recorder can be used to great advantage in providing arithmetic activities for independent assignments. Practice drills on number combinations and simple story problems can be recorded, allowing time for the students to copy the problem and work out the solution. The correct answer can then be given, enabling the students to check their own work and record their scores. The same kind of exercise can be utilized when learning spelling words or other important vocabulary drill.



Additional arithmetic skills can be reinforced with tape recorded activities. Instructions in counting money and making change can be given, allowing students to manipulate money and record their answers on paper. Exercises on telling time can be recorded, as well as directions for measuring with foot rulers.

Social competency skills can be practiced in small group situations by allowing students to practice various social courtesies in response to taped situations. For example, the teacher may record a few sentences, telling about a boy who accidently spills his milk in the lunchroom. Two students can be directed, via the tape, to assume the roles of the children involved and record a proper apology and how that apology should be accepted.

In addition to using different media for assignments, variety in seatwork can also be achieved by using a type of activity assigned previously but requesting a different kind of response. For example, if students are normally directed to answer questions by writing sentences or phrases, ask them to record their answers graphically by drawing pictures. Or, instead of drawing their own pictures, direct students to find pictures in old magazines to illustrate their answers.

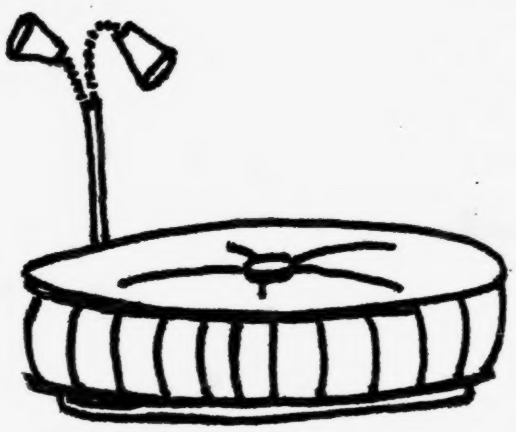
To vary arithmetic drill, direct students to prove their answers by drawing pictures of the problems. Number combinations can also be given with the correct answers already written but no addition or subtraction signs included. Students must determine which sign is appropriate and write it down for each problem.

Questions or problems may be given for several subject areas with the answers already written. Some of the answers should be incorrect; it becomes the task of the students to determine which are right or wrong.

Instead of writing assignments on paper, allow students to record their work orally on the tape recorder. This can be accomplished during an independent work period if the group to be using the recorder is fairly small.

If children are usually directed to paste pictures cut from magazines onto paper in the course of an assignment, variety can be achieved by having them sort the pictures into envelopes or boxes instead of pasting.

Assigning the task of copying the daily experience chart is an activity used frequently for unit seatwork. To vary this work, give students duplicated copies of the chart in which important vocabulary words have been left out. The words are to be written in blanks in the body of the experience story, either by referring to the original chart, choosing from a list included on the duplicated sheet, or recalling the words from memory. At other times students may be directed to copy the entire chart, underlining vocabulary words, finding all words with a long 'i' sound, etc. Illustrating experience chart stories with a picture or series of pictures is still another approach which may be used.



Upon occasion, an element of fun can be interjected into assignments by allowing students to use special art supplies or an unusual technique. For example, using colored felt tip pens or tracing something with carbon paper will have a certain amount of appeal. The success of these tactics depends on their "special" nature, however, and should not be used too frequently.

For the sake of variety it is important to assign some activities that are different from the more traditional kinds of seatwork such as worksheets or workbooks. Arithmetic drill can be achieved by assigning a series of problems in which newspaper ads are utilized. Students may be requested to find certain kinds of information in a telephone directory. *TV Guides* can be used for a series of exercises on telling time. Advertising posters and displays from retail stores can provide reading experiences as well as arithmetic drill. A variety of activities can be built around simple recipes, including exercises involving proper sequencing, following directions, and using fractions. Measurement skills can be enhanced by allowing students to actually measure pieces of lumber and yard goods. Information may be secured and recorded by reading labels on grooming products, seed packets, and food products.

Activities of this nature are of value because they add variety to seatwork assignments. In addition, however, they provide experiences that are more meaningful and relevant for retarded students. Devising such activities requires a great deal of teacher originality and flexibility. Teachers should constantly be alert for possible situations and ideas that could be utilized for independent work periods.

One further element to consider when planning seatwork that is appealing and interesting is the physical appearance of the work assignment itself. If the activity involves the use of a duplicated worksheet, for example, the quality of the reproduction process should be such that the resulting sheet is clear and highly legible. The printing should be easily read and the size of print, as well as any illustrations, should be sufficiently large. Assignments written on a chalkboard or overhead projector should also be fairly legible. Large pieces of paper should be provided if students are requested to draw pictures, and adequate art materials should be readily accessible.

A teacher need not be an artist to prepare work that is attractive. She does need to keep in mind certain points, however: (1) the legibility of the material, (2) the size of the paper, printing, illustrations, etc., (3) the general overall neatness of the work.

The need to provide for interest and variety points up the importance of careful planning on the teacher's part. One aspect of good planning is the adoption and utilization of a consistent recording system. If the teacher writes down her seatwork plans, she has a record of activities that have been completed by the students over a period of time. By referring to such plans, a teacher can determine what kinds of activities have been used frequently and if something of a more varied nature is needed. A suggested format for seatwork planning is included in Part II of this document.

7. Minimum Teacher Preparation Time

Some activities may be very constructive and worthwhile, but if the teacher has to spend too much time on the actual mechanics of preparing or duplicating the work, their usefulness is limited. The major portion of time a teacher spends on seatwork should be devoted to planning, designing and organizing, rather than to actual preparation.

Certain types of seatwork activities require much less time to produce than others. Assignments in which students draw pictures to illustrate vocabulary words, for example, necessitates a single list of words written on the chalkboard.

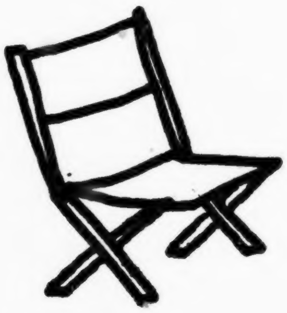
Worksheets for matching exercises, on the other hand, may require the teacher to trace a number of pictures or shapes. This task would entail a great deal more time to complete than the first example. Because the laborious effort of preparing illustrations or printed matter is completed for the teacher, commercially produced worksheets and workbooks have been popular and utilized widely. If such materials are appropriate for the particular group of students to whom they are given, they certainly should be used to facilitate speed of production. They should not be used exclusively, however.

In order to provide optimum learning experiences for students, some activities that do require quite a bit of teacher preparation time will need to be employed. Teachers should strive to establish a balance for themselves between activities which require more time to produce and those that are quicker to prepare. This can be accomplished with the assignments to be used with reading groups for any one day, for instance.

There are certain techniques teachers can use to help reduce repetition of effort in terms of seatwork production. Workbook pages may be torn from the booklets and inserted into 8 1/2" x 11" acetate folders. The children can write on the acetate with grease pencils or water color felt tip pens. After correction, the marks may be rubbed off and the acetate reused. This also allows for the same workbook pages to be used a number of times. These plastic folders may be purchased from stationery supply houses or school supply centers.

When seatwork assignments are written on transparencies by teachers, they may be used and then reused at a later time. Upon occasion teachers may also write assignments on large sheets of chart paper or on materials to be presented on bulletin boards. These, too, may be stored and used again. By designing work assignments in these forms, teachers can develop a resource of activities that can be employed a number of times, yet require only one production effort.

School systems should provide teachers with adequate secretarial services in terms of seatwork production. A teacher should be able to have materials typed for her, either on a manuscript typewriter or with a type



that is clearly legible. All spirit duplicated worksheets should be run off by the school secretary, so the teacher does not have to spend her valuable time performing this chore. The building principal should play an important role in seeing that such services are available and, if available, are used effectively and fairly.

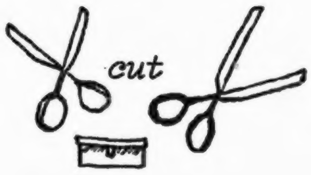
There may be opportunities to use people such as teacher aides, work-study students assigned to elementary classrooms, Future Teacher Club members, etc., in the actual preparation or production of seatwork. In some cases, there may be special students who could also help by copying material, or tracing pictures. The extent to which such people can be utilized will depend in large measure on the abilities of each particular individual. They may be of great help; it is important, however, that the teacher retain full responsibility for the planning of the seatwork.

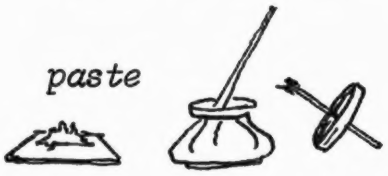
8. Writing and Explaining Directions

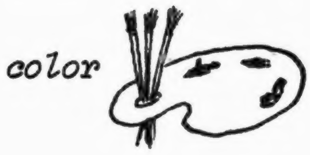
One essential characteristic of seatwork which is appropriate for use with mentally retarded students is the inclusion of written directions for each assignment. In addition, verbal instructions may be necessary to further explain the work, to inform students of the order in which to do several tasks, and to clarify procedures to follow when the work is completed. Because written directions and good oral instructions are an integral part of seatwork, they require careful planning on the part of the teacher.

Students must be able to read any directions written for independent assignments. They must be clear and easily understood, yet brief and to the point. The students must be able to follow the directions and do whatever processes are called for, whether they be thinking processes requiring judgments and generalizations or physical things such as copying sentences from the board. Furthermore, the tasks the students are directed to do must be something they can complete with little or no supervision from the teacher.

Time should be spent in teaching the students certain key vocabulary words in terms of directions. Words such as *cut, paste, color, pictures, look, make, words, sentences, read, do, find, begin, page,* should be introduced, gearing the number of words taught to the abilities of the particular group. Teachers should be consistent when writing directions by using only those words which have been learned. In addition, teachers should keep in mind the vocabulary words from basal readers that various groups have mastered, and use these when appropriate. For primary age children who have not learned to read yet, rebus pictures may be introduced to represent key words. Examples of this technique are:







It requires a certain amount of skill to write directions that are brief yet fully explanatory. The development of this skill will necessitate some practice and experimentation on the teacher's part. Specific suggestions are given in Part II of the publication.

In addition to written directions, it is often helpful to show an example of a completed task to illustrate procedures to follow when responding. This gives further assistance to the students and can enhance comprehension of the processes involved in the seatwork.

The importance of including written directions in seatwork should not be overlooked, for here is an excellent opportunity to develop and reinforce desirable work habits. The ability to read and follow directions is one competence deemed essential for satisfactory adjustment as an adult, both in job situations and in everyday living. By providing directions to be read and followed as an integral part of seatwork, valuable practice can be given to retarded students in meaningful settings. It should be noted that many commercial worksheets and workbooks fail to provide adequate written instructions for students. Because they tend to be poor in this respect, these materials should be modified by writing appropriate directions if they are to be used in special classes.

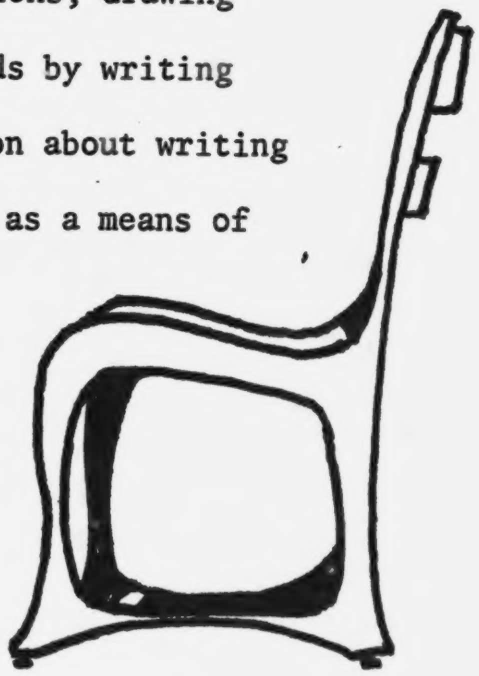
Verbal instructions to be given by the teacher should accompany written directions for each seatwork assignment. It is at this point the teacher can explain to the students the purpose of the activity and what they are to gain from doing it. This also provides a good opportunity to guide the students in their consideration of the steps involved in problem solving and how these apply to the assignment at hand. Any questions about the assignment or methods of responding can be clarified before students begin working independently. Planning for these verbal explanations is necessary and should be a part of the total procedures involved in seatwork development.

If seatwork activities are appropriate and adequate instructions are given, students should be able to progress with work and develop as much independence as possible. Procedures should be established with students for possible ways they can cope with problems encountered in the course of an assignment without requesting help from the teacher. For example, time should be spent discussing where to look to find out how to spell words needed for sentences. Children should be directed to ask certain students for help with any unknown words in reading materials. If students have difficulty following directions for an activity, discussion should bring out what things they can do to try to figure out the correct procedures. Growth in independence and self-direction, then is an important by-product of seatwork. This and other good work habits, such as staying with a job until it is completed, assuming responsibility for an individual task, and evaluating personal effort and work, are benefits that can accrue from well designed seatwork assignments.

9. Evaluating Student Work

One aspect of seatwork development which is sometimes neglected is the evaluation of students' efforts after they have completed the assignment. Evaluation is a vital part of planning, however, and should receive attention commensurate with its importance. If an assignment is checked and discussed with the students, they know where they made mistakes and what they can do to correct them. They have an immediate awareness of those areas which presented little difficulty for them. And, by evaluating pupil performance in an organized and systematic way, the teacher can tell if her instruction has been successful: *the students are able to do the things she has taught them.*

The first step in planning for evaluation of pupil performance in terms of seatwork involves the formulation of instructional objectives for each specific activity. Instructional objectives are statements which describe student behavior by telling what they should be able to do as a result of having been taught something. In describing such behavior, a criteria is established by which to judge pupil performance. That is, a child can demonstrate that he has learned a skill or concept when he can perform those acts specified in the objectives. Such acts may be answering correctly a series of questions, drawing a picture of a specific thing, or classifying words by writing them under the proper headings. Further discussion about writing instructional objectives and specific use of them as a means of evaluation is offered in Part II of this publication.



Also to be considered as teachers view the performance of their students is the amount of improvement shown by individual pupils over a period of time. Even though some children may fail to reach the stated objectives of an activity, if their performance is better than it has been in the past then the teacher should recognize the improvement and comment on it. Teachers must have a good understanding of the students in their classes to be truly sensitive to this type of evaluation.

Because independent work periods are used to stress desirable work habits, as well as reinforcing skills and concepts, teachers should be concerned with evaluating these work characteristics. As in all evaluation, this should be done in an organized and consistent manner. In this way teachers can accurately assess the degree to which students display these important traits and can plan for further emphasis on areas that may need to be improved.

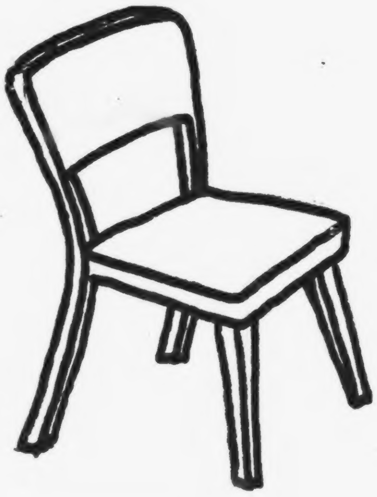
While the main responsibility for evaluating pupil performance rests with the teacher, the pupils themselves can share in this process. They can participate in evaluation quite literally when they check their own papers, record individual scores, and correct any mistakes. Students should also be encouraged to evaluate their own efforts in a more subjective way; they should review each assignment as they complete it to determine if they have done their best work, and have followed directions correctly. Meaningful activities in which the students see some purpose will contribute to feelings of personal satisfaction and self-accomplishment on the part of the learner.

The actual process of checking and correcting seatwork assignments can sometimes be a frustrating experience for teachers. The professional literature typically extolls the teacher to check seatwork

> ...at the earliest possible moment, therefore providing the child with feedback as to correctness, neatness, and whatever other factors which need attention. Work which is not checked by the teacher and reviewed with the child is quickly perceived as busy work. This leads, in children as in adults, to dissatisfaction and careless performance. (Jordan, Laura J.; "Effective Seatwork for the Educable", *Education and Training of the Mentally Retarded;* April, 1968, Vol. 3, No. 2; p. 93).

In practice, however, it is not always possible to check everything as soon as it is completed, nor to go over all assignments with students. There does not seem to be enough time in a school day to allow for these and all other essential activities. It will be necessary for teachers to make specific plans for checking, working as much as is possible into instructional periods so students can gain the kinds of benefits discussed above.

Other approaches to correcting seatwork will also have to be employed, however. For example, designing answer keys that can be placed over the assignment sheet so the correct responses show through pre-punched holes can facilitate speed of checking. Uniformity in terms of the physical appearance of seatwork will help make the task of checking easier. A worksheet where the answers will be found in the same location on each paper will be faster to check than an assignment where the placement of responses will vary with each individual paper. It would be wise for teachers to give specific instructions to students about how to copy things from the board, where to place items on the paper, and how much space to leave. In this manner, some degree of uniformity can be achieved. Assignments that require short answer responses will be quicker to correct than tasks which necessitate writing a paragraph, or drawing series of pictures. The nature of the assignment, then, may have a bearing on the decision of how or when it is to be checked.



Students should be given more opportunities to check their own seatwork. This may be handled in a variety of ways. They may check their own papers or exchange papers with neighbors and check as the teacher goes through the work with the group. Answer sheets may be placed on a table or on the bulletin board. When students complete their work they may be directed to check their papers against the answer sheets. Correct responses can be recorded on a tape recorder; students listen and check their papers as the tape is played. A "buddy" system might be worked out where pupils, working in pairs, can go through their work to evaluate it.

Answer keys might be used for some activities; for others, the judgments of the students themselves should be relied upon. When allowing students to check their own papers, discussion about the importance of honestly checking their own mistakes may be necessary. If students perceive seatwork as a meaningful learning experience, however, the desire to cheat should be greatly minimized. The attitude of the teacher will be of prime importance. If she creates an atmosphere of trust and respect, this will be communicated directly to the students. What better way to encourage the development of honesty than putting students in situations where they have a chance to be honest?

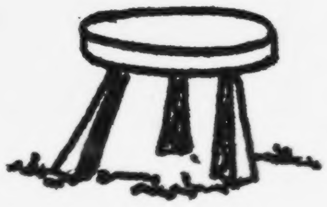
Whatever method of checking seatwork is employed, it is important to keep in mind what is being evaluated. The quality of the responses is more significant than the neatness of the work. While legibility is necessary, it should be kept in proper perspective. When students are asked to draw pictures, the ideas expressed should be evaluated rather than the art work itself. Likewise, when students write sentences or stories, the level of communication should be considered rather than the correctness of the spelling.

In conclusion, it should be reiterated that careful planning and an organized, systematic approach to seatwork development will greatly facilitate evaluation. By specifying skills and stating instructional objectives, the teacher has a far better idea of what to look for and what kinds of pupil performance will be accepted as satisfactory. In addition, it should be noted that judicious planning will eliminate "busy work" and greatly cut down on the volume of papers teachers must check.

10. Organization and Management

In addition to planning for a seatwork activity itself, there are other kinds of details that should be considered. These fall into the categories of organization and management and are important to the overall effectiveness of any independent assignment.

Time should be spent establishing various classroom procedures relative to seatwork. First, the teacher should have all materials needed for the day's assignments collected prior to the instructional period. It is often helpful, when passing out worksheets or other paper, to have just the correct number of pages counted out so there are no extra ones left over that will have to be put away. Assignments to be presented on the chalkboard, bulletin board, or transparencies should be written before the students come into the room. Procedures for passing out seatwork assignments at the beginning of the instructional period should be established with the students. For example, papers can be handed to the first person in each row, who takes one and passes the rest of the papers back to the person who sits behind him. This student takes a paper, passing the rest on. Another technique for passing out materials is to assign this job to one or two students for a period of a week or so. *Teachers vary in their handling of this detail, but it is important to make the effort to plan how to manage it quickly and efficiently. If one approach is followed consistently, a great deal of time can be saved.*

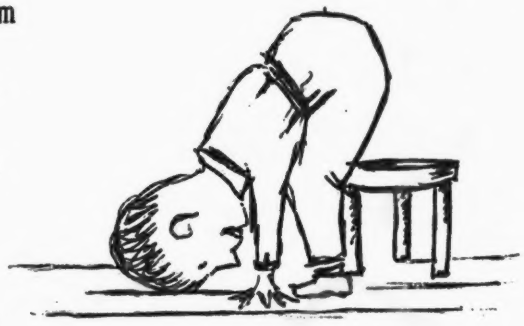


If students will need to use paste, scissors or colors to do their assignment, a set procedure for using and storing these materials should be instituted. Such materials may be kept in the students' desks and used as needed. If they do not bring their own paste, small jars such as baby food jars can be used, filling them from the large school supply jar. Extra scissors and colors should be stored on a shelf and be accessible for students to use if they cannot find their own.

It is wise to establish the rule that students may not interrupt a reading group to ask the teacher questions about their seatwork. Rather, it is better to allow a few minutes for questions between reading groups. Students should also be directed to ask fellow students for help with vocabulary words or questions on procedures. Discussion should bring out the importance of giving help but not telling the answers.

A consistent method of handing in papers when they are completed will also help eliminate confusion. Students may be directed to place their assignments on the teacher's desk as soon as they have finished. Another approach is to pick up all papers at the end of the period. Whatever method is employed, it should remain constant.

If students complete their assignments before the end of the work period, provisions should be made for them to utilize this free time constructively. A variety of games and toys, art materials, interest centers, and library books should be available for them to use. Construction toys such as Lego, Tinkertoys or building blocks can be played with quietly. Puzzles, stencils, and templates are good for coordination development. Games such as checkers, lotto, or dominoes can be played quietly by two people. Paper for drawing pictures, clay and colored chalk are examples of art supplies that students might use independently.



Interest centers may be set up on walls or book shelves, window sills, small tables or extra desks. These areas may contain collections of various kinds of objects and materials. Simple labels may be used to identify the areas and materials; in some instances the teacher may want to discuss a particular center and how the things are to be used with the entire group. An arithmetic center could contain, among other things, various boxes of large-size numbers cut from magazines and newspapers. Students could select numbers from this box that indicate prices, sizes, quantity, etc. A group of "price numbers" could be recorded and illustrations of things that would cost each amount drawn. A block of houses might be drawn and house numbers selected for them. A science center could display several sizes of magnifying glasses and varieties of objects to look at. An art center might include collections such as buttons, different textured cloth, ribbons, old jewelry, various shapes of macaroni, or different kinds of cardboard. Areas should be provided for students to display their resulting projects.

A large variety of library books should always be available in a library center. Included should be books on different reading levels and on a variety of subjects (See the SECDC publication *Social Problem Fiction-- A Source of Help for Retarded Readers*, 1969, for listings of appropriate fiction). Attention may be drawn to certain books upon occasion and various displays organized.

It should be kept in mind that interest centers are to be used by students independently and on their own volition. Children must learn, however, what the various spaces are to be used for, where to find materials, and which spaces are off limits for independent work, either permanently or only during certain times of the day.

If teachers will make specific plans for any free time students may have after they complete seatwork assignments, they can save themselves a great deal of grief. When students have nothing to do, trouble is bound to result. Adequate numbers of games, toys, supplies, books, and interest centers should be secured by the teacher. Then time should be spent discussing with students the possibilities for activities they may choose after their work is completed. It might be wise to start the year with only a few activities and as the children learn to handle themselves, additional things can be added. Charts can be made listing "Things to Do When My Work is Done." Rules and standards will have to be established with the group concerning any free time activity. For example, it may be necessary to limit the number of people who are out of their seats at any one time. If a toy or game results in noise that disturbs the reading group in progress, it would have to be put away. It will be necessary for all games and materials to be put away correctly at the end of the period. Planning of this nature will aid the teacher in maintaining order and control in the classroom. In addition, students can gain real benefits from the opportunities to exercise free choice and develop self direction.

A further consideration to be made relative to organization involves the "why", "how", and "where" of recording or writing down specific plans for seatwork assignments. As has been stated before, there is real value to be gained from recording plans for seatwork in a systematic and organized way. Perhaps the most important reason for such effort is the assurance that planning will be thorough; that the resulting activities will be relevant and meaningful. The cumulative effect of such planning is also important. If a record of each seatwork activity employed in the classroom is kept, the teacher has an immediate source of information relative to this aspect of her instructional program. Data about what was done, when it was completed and in what order or sequence it was presented is readily available.

A specific format for recording seatwork planning is suggested in Part III of this publication. This format allows teachers to write down, in a uniform manner, various aspects of the planning process, e.g., specific skills to be reinforced, instructional objectives, a description of the seatwork activity, etc. By using this format for all seatwork, planning will be recorded in a consistent and systematic form.

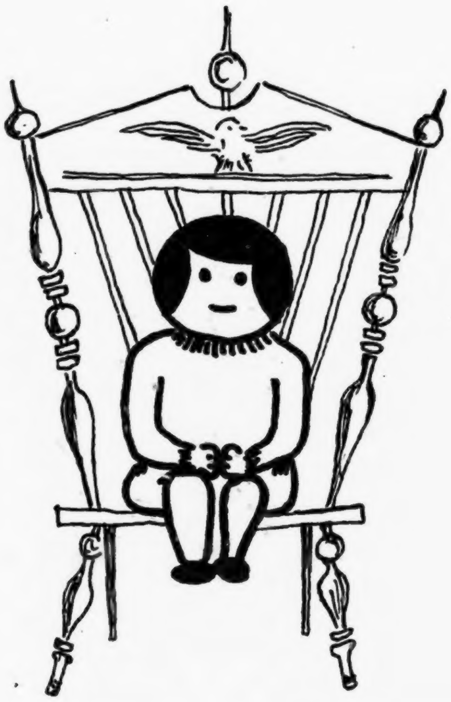
The format for recording seatwork activities suggested in Part III will result in fairly comprehensive and detailed plans. In addition to these, there is also the need for recording seatwork plans in another manner. There should be provision for writing certain kinds of information about seatwork in the daily lesson plan book along with plans for the various subject matter areas that are included in the instructional program. Items written in the daily lesson plan book should not be just a duplication of the original seatwork planning. Rather, the seatwork activity to be done by each group should be very briefly identified, e.g., Group 1 -- *Draw pictures of vocabulary words;* Group 2 -- *Addition and subtraction drill.* If a group is to complete more than one activity during the work period, the activities should be listed in the order in which they are to be done. Indication should also be made of the order in which the reading or arithmetic groups will be taught. This may have an influence on the seatwork activities that can be done, as well as the sequence in which assignments will be explained. For example, if a seatwork activity is based on a story to be introduced that day to a particular reading group, the group will have to work directly with the teacher first before they can work independently at their seats.

When writing the lesson plans that comprise the body of Life Experience Units, brief identifying information should be listed for the seatwork activities that are included in each lesson. Such information should be recorded in the Activities column of the unit lesson plan (see the SECDC publication, *Life Experience Starter Units, Set #2,* 1969, for discussion and examples of this format). The complete seatwork planning formats for each independent activity used in a particular unit topic should be grouped together in proper order and placed at the end of the unit.

By working through certain prescribed planning steps and systematically recording each step, the teacher's thinking is directed toward the selection of seatwork activities that are appropriate and meaningful for retarded students. The result of such planning will be of immediate value to the teacher as she works with her pupils. But if for some reason the teacher is unable to be in the classroom, the thorough planning done by her will be of tremendous help to a substitute teacher. Clear instructions for handling seatwork will help eliminate one of the most difficult problems encountered by substitutes.

In order for a substitute teacher (as well as the special class teacher) to utilize seatwork plans quickly, the plans should be arranged in some kind of filing system which makes them readily accessible. The completed seatwork planning formats may be punched and kept in a notebook, placed in file folders and stored in a filing cabinet, or grouped together and inserted in large clasp envelopes. As was noted previously, seatwork plans for Life Experience Units should be kept with the unit lesson plans. The exact method of filing will, of course, vary with individual teachers; probably the plans will be divided into categories such as subject matter areas, instructional levels, or degree of difficulty. Within each category plans should be arranged according to the date on which they were used. This will show the sequence in which various activities were assigned and completed.

There will also be a need to organize, identify and store other kinds of items related to seatwork. Masters should be kept of all spirit duplicated worksheets that are used. Each master should be identified



in some manner, perhaps by recording the date on which it was assigned. It should also be noted on the seatwork planning format that describes the activity in which the worksheet was used that a master for the sheet is available. Thus, if the teacher wants to use this activity over again, there will be no need to make a new master copy. Other things which should be kept are some transparencies, large charts, bulletin board materials, and tape recordings that have been used in independent work assignments. Again, each item should be identified and then stored in such a manner that they can be utilized again if so desired.

Teachers who utilize an organized and systematic approach to seatwork planning over a period of time will find they have assembled valuable personal collections of tested seatwork ideas and materials. It would be desirable if suggestions, special techniques and materials could be shared with other special teachers in the field. The use of a consistent format will greatly facilitate interchange of ideas among individual teachers.

In addition to an informal kind of sharing among a few teachers, it would seem advantageous to have a broader system such as a clearinghouse through which seatwork materials could be exchanged. Local school districts might provide such a service for their special education teachers. A system of identifying seatwork materials would have to be established, indicating the pertinent subject matter area, skill or concept being emphasized, and the level of instruction. Teachers in the school district could then request suggestions and materials applicable to their own teaching situations. The clerical task of cataloging, filing and responding to requests would be provided by the local school. Materials to be fed into such a cleaninghouse could come from teachers themselves. Probably the most effective way to begin such a project would be to hire a committee of special teachers for a period of several weeks in the summertime. They could develop a variety of activities in several areas and assist in organizing them to get the program operational. Throughout the school year, then, teachers would be encouraged to contribute to the project, as well as to avail themselves of the service.

It may not be feasible for some school districts to provide services such as the clearinghouse described above. Perhaps it will be possible to incorporate something of this nature in the functions of the Title II Media Centers as they provide expanding services to special educators. Emphasis could be placed on the topic of seatwork in area in-service training programs; the actual storage and dissemination of seatwork materials could emanate from the Centers.

As an example of what can be done on a regional basis, the Northwest Regional Instructional Materials Center, located at the University of Oregon, has initiated a project which could lead toward a clearinghouse for seatwork materials. Entitled "Project Seatwork," it encourages teachers working in the states served by this IMC facility to contribute their ideas and suggestions. A teacher may send in one seatwork material and receive in return a packet of 10 seatwork materials in one of the following subjects: arithmetic, reading, social studies, science, home economics and vocational training.

The success of a clearinghouse on any level, local or regional, will depend in large measure on the willingness of special teachers to share their original ideas and appropriate materials. It becomes particularly important for teachers to keep in mind that seatwork should involve more than worksheets or workbooks. These kinds of materials are readily available; what is not as accessible are materials and suggestions that are truly appropriate and relevant for mentally retarded students. Teachers can make a meaningful contribution to their profession by implementing an organized and systematic approach to the development of worthwhile seatwork and then sharing the results of such an approach with their associates in the field.

PART II

DIRECTIVES FOR PLANNING SEATWORK ACTIVITIES

The development of seatwork which is appropriate for use with the mentally retarded requires an organized and systematic approach. The task of structuring learning experiences that are relevant and sequential is too important to leave to haphazard, inadequate planning techniques.

The proposed directives presented in this document would require teachers to complete certain prescribed steps as they plan seatwork. Each step is designed to direct teachers' thinking relative to the generation of resources of ideas, methods of assessing relevancy, and organization of the seatwork assignments. Once these planning steps have been completed, actual preparation of materials to be used in activities would be carried out.

The use of a consistent format for recording the preparatory steps as they are concluded is suggested. By establishing a uniform method of describing teacher planning, activities and ideas can be shared with colleagues. Such an approach will have a cumulative effect and can result in a resource of tested seatwork suggestions.

The already busy teacher may view the series of tasks these directives suggest as being too time consuming or demanding. Once the necessary skills for developing and evaluating seatwork activities are acquired, however, planning will be greatly facilitated and the actual time required to complete the processes will decrease. It should be borne in mind that the purpose of the approach suggested in this document is to assist teachers in the formulation of seatwork activities that are appropriate to the needs of the mentally retarded. If this objective is met, the time and effort expended would be well spent. In addition, teachers should find the execution and management of independent assignments in daily classroom situations are made easier as a result of well planned and carefully organized seatwork activities.

PREPARATORY STEPS FOR PLANNING SEATWORK ACTIVITIES

The preparatory planning steps involve the teacher in a series of tasks which will culminate in the selection of a specific seatwork activity. The purpose of these steps is to attempt to insure that the activity selected will be relevant and meaningful to the student. In addition, the planning steps focus on means of communicating the instructional intent of the assignment to the student, and provisions for evaluating student performance. Planning relative to materials and/or equipment needed for the activity is also a function of these steps.

There are seven major steps which comprise the proposed planning approach. Each will be discussed, descriptions of the kinds of information to be included will be given, and examples of completed preparatory steps will be shown.

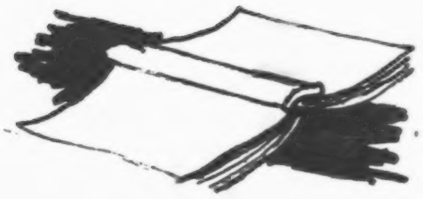
STEP 1. IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION

It is important to begin the planning of any specific seatwork activity by listing certain identifying information. This should include:

1. Subject area of activity.
2. Group for whom activity is designed.
3. Level of instruction at which students are functioning.

4. Approximate time required to complete activity.
5. Date on which activity is to be used.

Subject Area



The first identifying task is to name the subject matter area which the seatwork activity is to present. For example, if the activity is to be used to reinforce a skill in the area of reading, the subject --*Reading*-- would be written. If the seatwork is related to a Life Experience Unit being taught, the name of the unit should be listed.

As was noted in the previous example, seatwork can, and in fact should, involve other subject areas in addition to reading or arithmetic. Relevant, meaningful seatwork is designed to reinforce a skill or concept that has been developed at some previous time in a group instructional period. By involving students in an activity where they are called upon to apply the skill, teachers can evaluate the effectiveness of the instruction. Independent activities of this nature are appropriate to any subject matter included in the school curriculum.

Group for Whom Activity is Designed

A second item of identification is a designation of the group for whom the seatwork is designed. Reading, arithmetic, or spelling groups would be listed by whatever name or number the teacher has assigned them; for example, Reading Group I, Mary's arithmetic group, the middle spelling group. If the assignment is to be completed by the entire class, this should be indicated.

Level of Instruction

The approximate level of instruction at which the students in the group are functioning should be recorded. For a reading group this might be a designation such as pre-primer or 2.1. For unit activities the general level of the class should be listed, such as primary, intermediate, junior high, etc.

Approximate Time Required

An indication should be made of the approximate time that will be required for students to complete the activity. It can then be determined if more than one independent assignment will be needed for a particular work period.

Although space is provided for recording the approximate time required with other identifying information, it will not be possible to fill in this item until the specific activity has been determined. The blank is placed in this position in the seatwork planning format, however, so that once completed, this particular item can be referred to quickly.

Date

The date on which the seatwork activity is to be completed should be indicated. A listing of the day, month and year will be helpful when compiling a file of tested seatwork activities that have been used with a particular group or class.

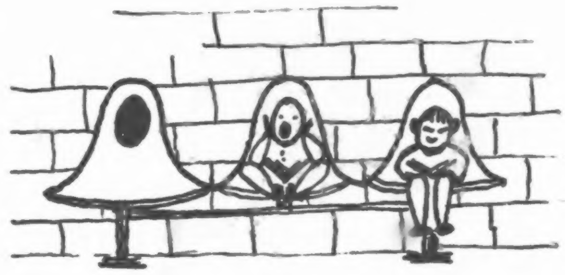
Sample of Completed Identification Information Step

Subject Area Unit *Grooming* Group *Entire Class*
Level *Intermediate* Date *Feb. 10, 1969*
Approximate Time Required *20 minutes*

STEP 2. SPECIFICATION OF MAJOR SKILLS OR CONCEPTS TO BE REINFORCED

Seatwork, if it is to be educationally profitable, must involve the students in activities that deal with skills or concepts that have been previously taught. Presenting such skills and concepts in a different context or situation serves to reinforce those important things to be learned. The specification of major skills that have been taught, then, becomes a significant step in planning appropriate seatwork.

This is not a particularly easy task to do, however. Many commercially prepared instructional materials, in attempting to present information relative to the purposes of the materials and the skills to be developed, are confusing. Teachers who use these materials may sometimes find it difficult to distinguish the skills or concepts that are most important from the array of additional details listed for a particular lesson. For example, in many reading textbook manuals marginal notes are written within the framework of the lesson suggestions for each story. These are intended to pinpoint the skills being developed in each aspect of the reading lesson. For a four page story, however, one teacher's manual lists twenty-one such marginal notes. Some of the information is germane to the development of skills; some is supplementary in nature.



Other examples of commercially prepared materials may be found which offer teachers' editions that are worded in general, ambiguous terms. This is particularly true in respect to stating the purposes of specific skills or concepts being developed through these lessons.

Then there are some materials in which skills, as such, are not listed at all. Suggestions for using the textbook pages may be given, but little attempt is made to outline or emphasize to the teacher the major points being considered in each lesson.

Specifying skills or concepts is somewhat easier when working with

Life Experience Units. The general objectives, scope of lesson statements, and instructional objectives deal with relevant concepts and appropriate skills, simplifying the task of restating them for the purposes of seatwork development. A difficulty which does occur in this area, however, is a result of the nature of many concepts taught through a unit approach. Because these concepts may be somewhat intangible, it becomes a problem to express them in a specific and precise manner.

It becomes apparent that teachers will not be able to find specific skills and concepts listed in a consistent manner in available curriculum materials. Yet, if seatwork activities are to be relevant and worthwhile, they must involve the use of important skills. It goes without saying that it is impossible to reinforce a previously taught skill if the teacher is not sure just what skills have been taught. Since most instructional materials fail to provide the clear identification that is needed, teachers themselves must develop the ability to pick out relevant skills and concepts, word them in a simple way, and define them well. To aid in this process the following suggestions are given.

Considerations Related to the Specification of Major Skills and Concepts

1. Review lessons that have been taught within the past few days.
2. Determine what skills or concepts were included in the lesson or group of lessons.
3. Refer to teachers' manuals:
    a) Skills may be described in marginal notes to the teacher. (See Teachers' Editions for *The Macmillan Reading Program*, published

by the Macmillan Co., New York, 1966).

  b) Teachers' editions of workbooks may have the skills listed at the bottom or side of the pages. (See Teachers' Editions, *Think-and-Do Books* to accompany The New Basic Readers Curriculum Foundation Series; Scott, Foresman & Co., 1965).

  c) Skills or concepts may be discussed in various informational paragraphs which accompany teaching procedures and activities suggestions. (See Teacher's Annotated Editions, *Modern School Mathematics*, Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1967).

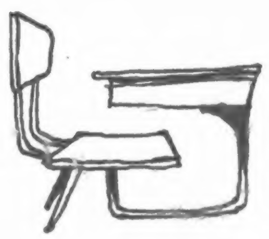
4. Consider the scope of lesson statements and general objectives listed for a life experience unit topic (See *Life Experience Starter Units, Set #2*, Special Education Curriculum Development Center, 1969).

5. Look at skills and concepts listed in a curriculum guide (See *Planning an Arithmetic Curriculum for the Educable Mentally Retarded*, Special Education Curriculum Development Center, 1968).

6. Decide what skills or concepts from the lesson or lessons are the most important and should be reinforced.

   a) Keep in mind the needs of the class and consider these when making a decision concerning the relevance of a particular skill or concept.

   b) Base the decision on the relative merits of the skills or concepts, and not just on expediency. Some skills are easier to define than are certain concepts, and lend themselves more readily to utilization in traditional types of seatwork activities. For example, developing seatwork that deals with various phonetic skills is a much easier task than designing activities to reinforce intangible concepts such as the development of honesty or punctuality.



c) Consider the skills that have received emphasis in previous seatwork activities. If some things have been reinforced in several recent exercises, they may not warrant additional emphasis at this time.

7. Write down the one or two skills or concepts considered to be the most important. It will be these skills that will be stressed in the seatwork activity to be developed.

   a) Limit the listing to one or two major skills. While there are probably additional skills which will have to be used by the students to complete an activity, the major one or two to be reinforced is of concern at this point.

   b) In writing the skills, make them very specific and to the point. There is real value in forcing oneself to actually think out to the point of being able to verbalize and write down the specific skill to be taught. For example, the statement, "*Skill is using phonetic and structural clues in attaching unfamiliar words*" is too general to give much direction in terms of what specific phonetic and structural clues are to be utilized, or just what unfamiliar words are to be analyzed. A phrase such as: "*Use of phonetic analysis skill of substituting the initial consonant* *h* *in a list of known words to form new words,*" will be more helpful when devising an actual seatwork activity.

   c) Make sure the skills or concepts are specific enough so that they can be stressed in a single activity. The example given below of concepts for the unit topic of HEALTH presents a case in point. In preparing this SECDC guide, the author had first listed "*Individual differences in size and ability are normal among* *children."* When trying to devise an activity for this, however, it becomes apparent that there were actually several concepts involved. One entails differences in physical size, but also included in the statement is reference to differences in abilities. This could imply the many different abilities various people possess, as well as the variations of the same ability in different people. A third factor is the concept that these differences are normal and should be expected. A single activity could be devised to reinforce two of these points, but not all three. Therefore, further delineation resulted in the following list of concepts: *(1) There are individual differences in physical size among children. (2) Such size differences are normal.* The concepts about differences in abilities and that these differences are normal would be stressed in the seatwork activity for the next unit lesson.

8. After relevant skills and concepts have been specified, these listings can be used to aid in the organization of skills into a logical teaching sequence. While some decisions on proper sequencing can be made as seatwork planning is in progress, the majority of work relative to sequencing will be accomplished after skills have been consistently specified over a period of time. This period may cover an entire semester or year; it may involve the time required for planning and teaching one unit topic; or it can include the progression through a specific book in a basal reading series.

Samples of Completed Specification of Major Skills and Concepts Step

A. Arithmetic

1. Linear measurement skills involving the use of inches.
2. Use of fractional divisions of inch: 1/4, 1/2, 3/4.

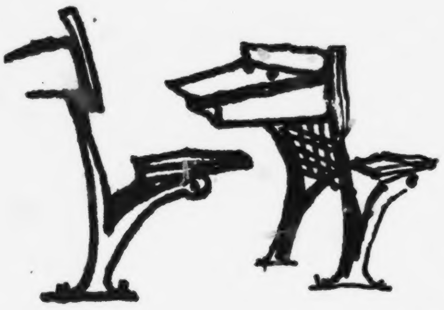
B. Unit topic - Health

1. There are individual differences in physical size among children.
2. Such size differences are normal.

C. Reading

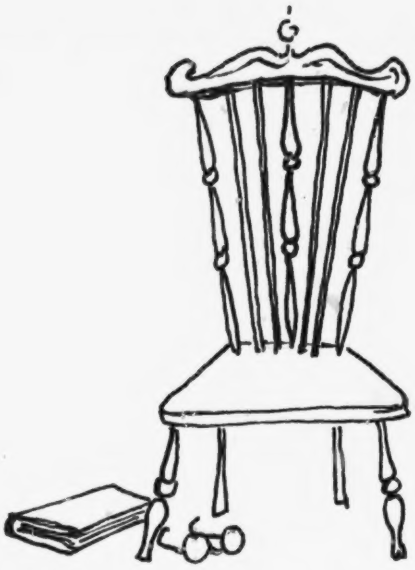
Draw inferences from reading and picture interpretation.

STEP 3. INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES FOR SEATWORK ACTIVITY

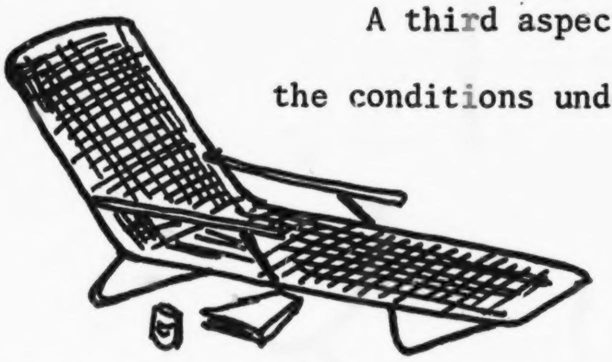


The concern in the previous step was to specify those skills and concepts that are emphasized in the instructional program. The focus in the present step will be directed toward ascertaining how effective the teaching of these skills has been. By formulating instructional objectives for each seatwork activity, a procedure is established whereby we can evaluate if the students have mastered the skill to the point where they can successfully apply it in a relevant situation.

An instructional objective is a statement which describes an educational intent or goal. It tells what is to be accomplished in the learning situation; what we want to do. This goal is expressed in terms of student behavior. That is to say, the objective tells what the learner will be doing to show that he has learned what was taught. Such student behavior, or performance, must be observable to the teacher, either in the form of an overt act or in verbal responses. An example of an instructional objective statement is, *"To be able to verbally count from* *one to ten."* In this example, a student can show that he knows how to count from one to ten by actually counting from one to ten, and by doing the counting out loud, so the teacher can hear him.



In addition to specifying student terminal behavior that should result from the learning experience, instructional objectives also describe the level of performance that will be accepted as evidence of successful attainment of the objective. The statement will reflect how well the student must perform in order to show that he has learned what was taught. For example, to review vocabulary words students might be directed to complete a worksheet by selecting words from a list at the bottom of the page and writing them in blanks in a series of sentences. The instructional objective for this activity might be, *"To be able to successfully complete 8 out of 10 sentences by selecting and writing in the correct work, given a list of ten words from which to choose."* In this activity, if students fail to get at least eight out of the ten sentences right, the teacher can assume the students do not have sufficient grasp of the vocabulary words and further work with them will be necessary.

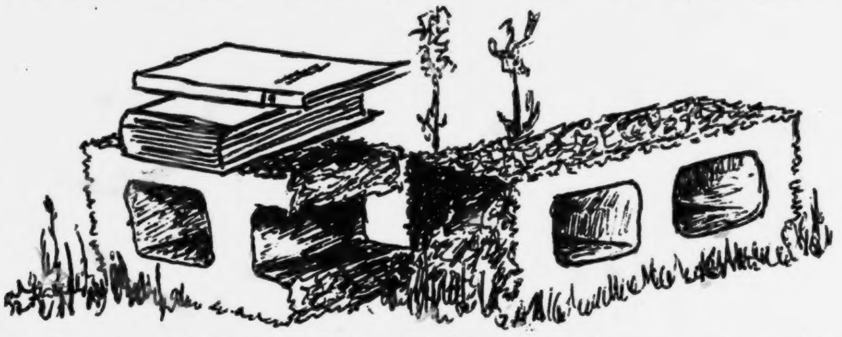


A third aspect of an instructional objective suggests the conditions under which the desired behavior should occur. It indicates what kinds of aids or information will be provided for the learner or what things will be denied. For example, in the previous paragraph a seatwork activity was described in which student were to choose words from a list. This condition, the provision of a list, was stated in the instructional objective, "...., *given a list of ten words from which to choose.*" In this instance a student would be called upon to recognize a vocabulary word and copy it. Because only ten words are given in the list, the student might be able to select some words by the process of elimination. Had the list contained fifteen or twenty words, the task of successfully completing the worksheet would be more difficult, for it would require the student to read and eliminate some words as not appropriate. Had no list of words been given at all the task would be even more difficult, for the student would have to be able to recall words and know how to spell them in order to fill in the blanks.

Instructional objectives describe terminal behavior and thus are very specific. They are concerned with one particular activity or lesson and the student behavior that can result from that activity. They serve as the basis upon which the lesson or activity is built. In devising seatwork, then, stating instructional objectives becomes an important step in planning.

The value to be derived from formulating specific instructional objective statements cannot be over-emphasized. The greatest value lies in the realm of evaluation. By stating what students have to do to demonstrate they have learned a particular skill, a basis is set by which their performance can be assessed. Looking for terminal behavior provides teachers with a means to determine if and when their instruction has been successful. In addition, materials and procedures used in the learning situation can be evaluated to insure that skills or concepts to be stressed are indeed reinforced in the most advantageous manner.

Also beneficial is the degree of planning and resulting organization that occurs as teachers consider the specific goals they wish to accomplish in their instructional programs. If time is spent on this kind of planning at the beginning of seatwork development, a great deal of wasted effort can be averted later, both by the students and the teacher.

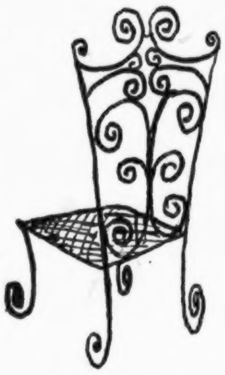


Writing Instructional Objectives for Seatwork Activities

1. First review the skill or concept specified in the previous planning step. Keep in mind that the purpose of the seatwork activity will be to reinforce this skill.
2. Think of a seatwork activity for the students to do in which the concept is reinforced in some manner, or the skill is to be used. This will be the activity toward which our planning is aimed. At this point, however, the concern is not one of writing down the activity in a final form. Rather, it will serve as a part of the process involved in formulating instructional objectives. Some teachers may prefer to jot down the ideas for an activity on a piece of scratch paper; others may wish to merely keep the ideas in mind.
3. Begin to formulate an instructional objective statement. Describe the behavior students will display as they engage in the activity, using phrases such as, "To be able to ....*write, recall, identify, contrast, solve, create,* etc." The abilities of the particular group of children for whom the objective is to apply should be kept in mind to insure

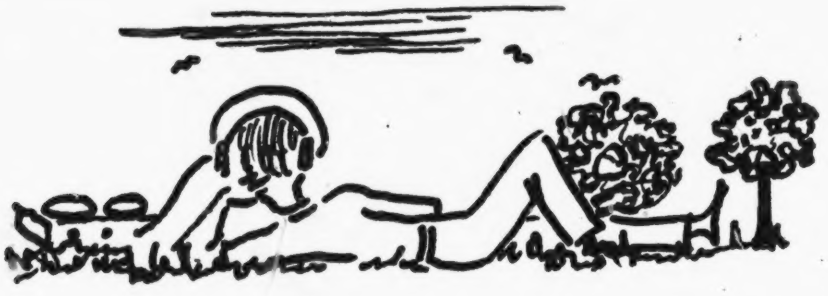
that the objective will reflect reasonable expectations in terms of student performance. For example, an activity for a primary age special class might be to have the children practice writing their names and addresses. Because this age group would probably be using manuscript printing, this should be specified in the objective statement. Thus, an objective worded in behavioral terms for this activity might be, *"To be able to print his own name and address."*

4. Next, determine the level of performance which will be acceptable as successful attainment of the objective. In other words, just how well will the teacher expect the students to do the task before she will say they have met the instructional objective that was planned? This criteria should be specified in the objective statement. For example, this can be accomplished in the objective stated above by adding the word, legibly: *"To be able to legibly print his own name and address."* Again, the teacher must be very cognizant of the capabilities of her students when she arrives at a decision concerning the level of performance.



5. Suggest the conditions under which the desired behavior is to occur. For example, if the primary children are given a copy of their names and addresses, the task of printing them is much easier than if they are called upon to recall them from memory and then record the information on paper. The instructional objective needs to be explicit so that the conditions under which the task is to be performed is obvious. The statement concerning the primary class activity should read in its final form, *"To be able to legibly print his own name and address, given a sample to copy."*

6. The original ideas about the seatwork activity may in some cases have to be modified as a result of the thinking generated by the formulation of instructional objectives. It may be found that some aspect of the activity is too difficult or too easy, or that it doesn't require the students to use the desired skill as was intended. In many circumstances teachers may find their thinking was too general or vague, and the need to plan more specifically becomes evident. If teachers find they cannot write instructional objectives that are satisfactory for a particular activity, it may be that that activity should be replaced with one which is more suitable.
7. Some seatwork activities will require more than one instructional objective. Write as many as are needed to fully describe the intended outcomes of the seatwork exercise in terms of student behavior.
8. The instructional objectives written for seatwork to be used with life experience units may or may not be the same objectives as are listed for individual lesson plans within the unit.



Summary: Writing Instructional Objectives

Stating instructional objectives for seatwork is an important step in the planning process. By completing this kind of planning teachers are in a much better position to make judgments relative to the appropriateness of seatwork activities and teaching techniques. This planning involves moving from the specification of skills and concepts to to a description of what students must do to apply these skills, leading toward the outlining of a specific seatwork activity. Thus, a basis for evaluating how effective instruction has been is being established. If a teacher has been successful in teaching a particular concept to the student, then there should be some change in what the student is now able to do.

Samples of Completed Instructional Objectives

A. Arithmetic

   1. To be able to make a folder for class notes from a 12" x 18" piece of paper, given written directions and diagrams.
   2. To be able to print a title, measuring and marking guidelines with a foot ruler, given written directions and diagrams.

B. Unit topic - Health

   1. To be able to differentiate between sizes of children in the class by drawing pictures of three children who are the biggest, the smallest, and average sized.
   2. To be able to generalize from sentences copied onto a seatwork paper by verbally explaining that differences in sizes are alright and to be expected.

C. Reading

   1. To demonstrate ability to draw inferences from reading and picture interpretation by answering, to the satisfaction of the teacher, a series of questions about a newspaper cartoon.

STEP 4. DESCRIPTION OF SEATWORK ACTIVITY

The selection of a specific seatwork activity is the goal toward which planning efforts have been directed. Previous preparatory planning steps involved the teacher in tasks designed to insure the relevance, appropriateness, and affectiveness of any activity to be selected. Steps in the planning format which follow Step 4 deal with techniques for implementing the activity once it has been chosen and defined. The job at hand, then, of selecting and describing a specific seatwork activity is of major importance in the total planning process.

When formulating instructional objectives in Step 3 of the preparatory planning steps, it was necessary to think of a seatwork activity through which the desired student behavior would have an opportunity to occur. In that step, however, the emphasis was not on defining the activity completely nor putting it in final form. Rather, it constituted a part of the process involved in writing instructional objectives. Moving on in the planning procedure, it now becomes a function at this point to focus directly on the seatwork activity. The purpose of this step is to scrutinize the activity by testing its potential against certain criteria, to refine and clarify the activity, and then to record it in final form. To aid in this process the following suggestions are given:

Considerations Related to Description of Seatwork Activity

1. First review Step 2 in the preparatory planning format by reading the major skills or concepts listed that are to be reinforced in the seatwork assignment. Then read the instructional objectives listed in

the seatwork assignment. Then read the instructional objectives listed in Step 3 and review the activity considered in that step through which students would use the skill or concept in some manner.

2. To test the potential value of the activity, check it against the following points. Make any changes that are necessary to improve the activity.
   a) Is the activity meaningful and functional; is the skill used in a situation which is as close as possible to the way it would be utilized in real life?
   b) Does the activity really require the use of the skill or reinforce the important concept? Make sure the activity reinforces the skill you intend and not just the skills of cutting, pasting, copying, etc.
   c) Does the activity require too many other skills in addition to the one being emphasized? Are any of these secondary skills too difficult?
   d) Can the students do the activity independently; is it within their ability range and experiential background.
   e) Are materials, supplies or equipment needed for the activity available in sufficient quantities for the particular classroom situation?
   f) Will the activity require the students to think; is it challenging enough?
   g) Does the activity allow students to use problem solving techniques in a meaningful way?
   h) Is the activity reasonably interesting, attractive and varied?

i) Is the amount of teacher preparation time required to develop and produce the activity within reason?

j) Will the activity engage the students in independent work for a sufficient period of time, or will it take too long to complete?

k) Can the activity be done quietly if other instruction is taking place in the classroom?

3. Write a narrative description of the activity. This should be inclusive enough that someone else reading the plan could understand the activity and be able to use it. In addition, specific details should be planned out and listed, e.g., sentences or words that will be put on the chalkboard for students to copy, or the text of the material to be recorded on a tape recorder. When a worksheet is involved, write down the sentences that will be printed on the sheet, if these sentences are devised by the teacher. If material is being copied directly from another source, such as exercises found in teachers' manuals, indicate in the planning format what type of material is being used and document the source completely (listing author, title, publisher, copyright date and page number).

Planning these "nitty gritty" details of seatwork is a rather tiresome and time consuming chore. The temptation to leave the details until tomorrow is often quite strong. However, if teachers will force themselves to think through and write down the specific information that will comprise the seatwork activity as a part of the planning process, tomorrow will be much less hectic.

In addition to avoiding a last minute rush, planning the details in advance helps the teacher anticipate any problems students might encounter as they do the assignment. For example, as the teacher works through the activity in its entirety, she can determine such things as how much space will be needed for pasting pictures, if there are enough appropriate examples in the newspaper ads for students to complete the exercise correctly, if the assignment is going to be too complicated for the students to do, and so forth. Getting these kinds of details ironed out in advance can save a great deal of confusion and frustration during the work period for both students and teachers.

4. Re-read the instructional objectives in Step 3 again. After finalizing the seatwork activity, it may be necessary to go back and modify the objectives in some cases.
5. Determine the approximate time that will be required for the majority of students to complete the activity. Write this approximation in the space provided at the beginning of the format.

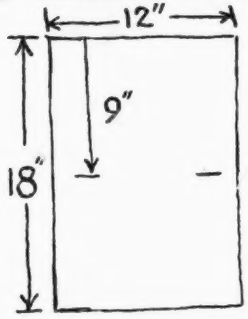
Samples of Completed Seatwork Activity Descriptions

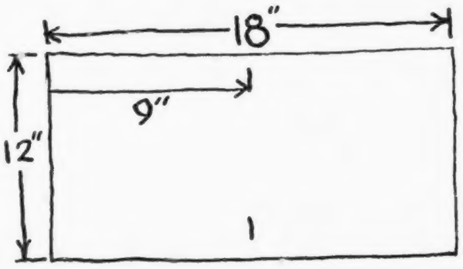
A. Arithmetic

Make a folder to hold class notes from a large piece of construction paper. Use foot rulers and measure to fold the paper in half, draw guidelines for a title, leave space between words in the title, and draw a line on which the student's name will be written. Directions and diagrams for making the folder and writing a title are duplicated on papers to be given to each student. The following information will be included:

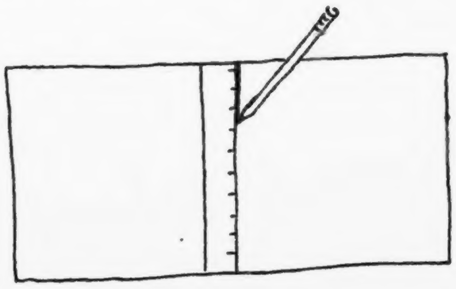
1. Look at the sides of the paper that are 18 inches long. Measure

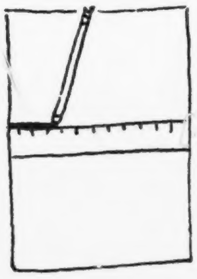
down 9 inches from the top and make a small line on each side.



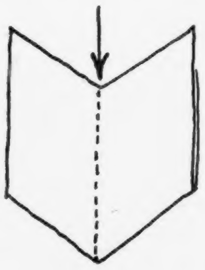


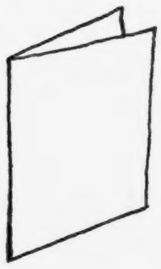
2. Use the ruler and draw a line across the paper.

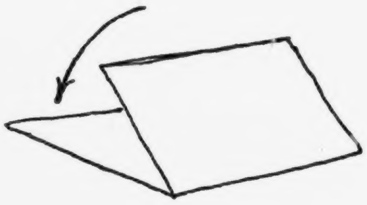




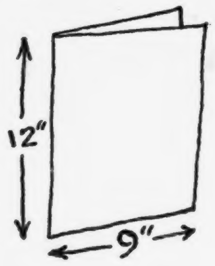
3. Fold the paper in half along this line.



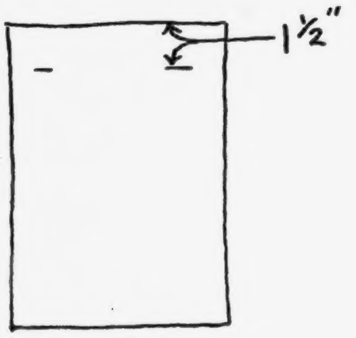


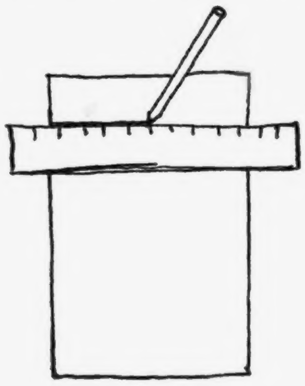


4. Be sure the fold is on the left side.

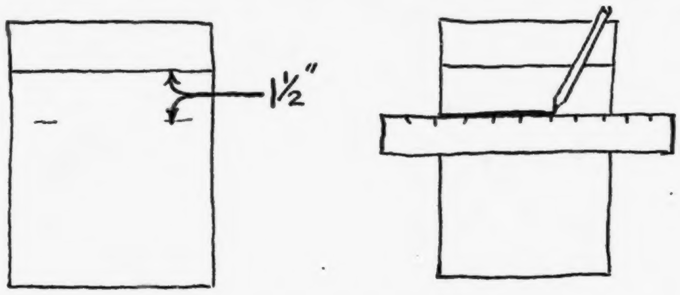


5. Measure down 1 1/2 inches from the top and make a small line on each side. Use the ruler and draw a line across the page.

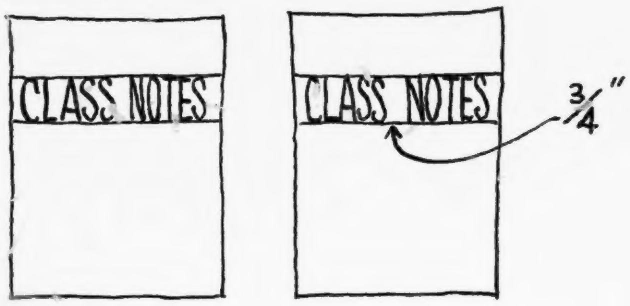




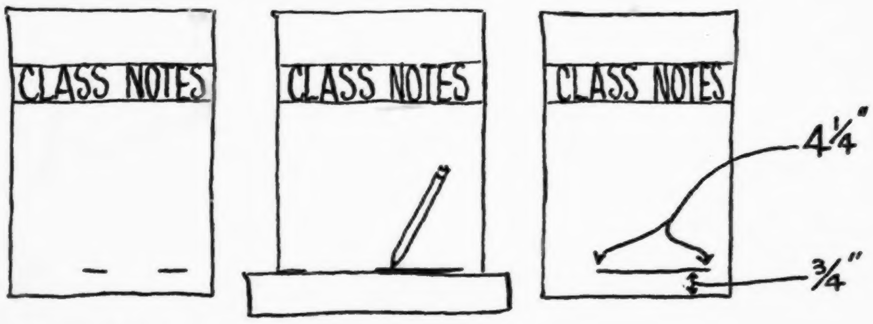
6. Measure down 1 1/2 inches from the line you just drew, make small lines, and use the ruler to draw across the page.



7. Write the title, CLASS NOTES. Measure 3/4 inch between the two words.



8. Measure 3/4 inch up from the bottom corner and make two small lines. Use the ruler and make a line 4 1/4 inches long. Write your name on the line.



B. Unit Topic - Health

Draw pictures of three children in the class: The child who is the biggest, child who is average in size, and the child who is the smallest. Write each person's name under his picture, copying the names from the board. The following sentences are to be copied from the board onto a sheet of writing paper. Cut out the sentences and paste them onto the newsprint under the pictures -

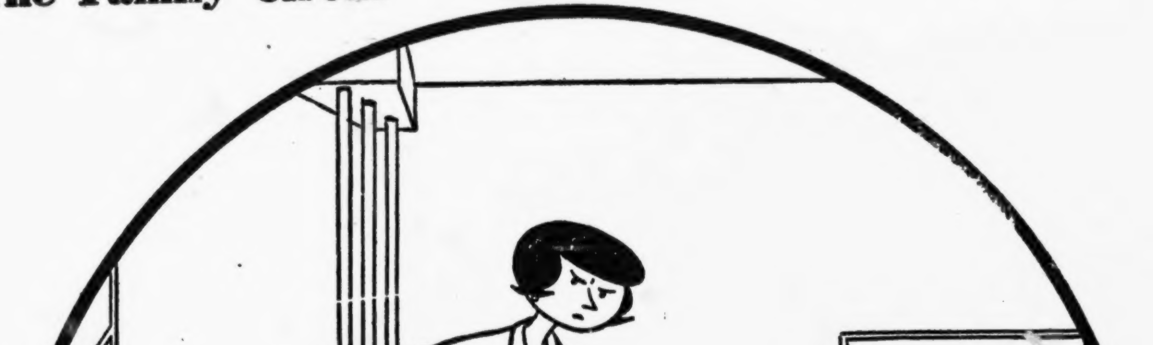
WE ARE NOT ALL THE SAME SIZE.
IT IS ALL RIGHT FOR US TO BE THIS WAY.

C. Reading

Project a transparency on which a Family Circus cartoon has been reproduced. Students are to study the cartoon and read a series of questions written on the chalkboard. Answers are to be written for each question:

1. How does Mother feel about the children eating in the living room?
2. Why would she feel this way?
3. Why does the little boy want the old carpet back?
4. Why did Mother let them eat on the old carpet?
5. Do you think Mother will ever let the children eat in the living room again? Why or why not?
6. What would you do if you were Mother?

The Family Circus



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"I wish we'd get our old carpet back so we could eat in the livin' room again."

STEP 5. LISTING OF NEEDED MATERIALS AND/OR EQUIPMENT

All materials and/or equipment that will be needed for the specific seatwork activity described in the planning format should be identified. The teacher can quickly refer to this listing and assemble the necessary items prior to the actual use of the independent assignment. This step may be completed at the same time the activity is being worked out and described in Step 4 or it can be done as a separate task.

Considerations Related to Listing of Needed Materials and/or Equipment

1. Write down any consumable material that will be used in the seatwork activity. This could include such items as colors, scissors, paint, paste, newsprint (indicate size of sheets, e.g., 12" x 18", notebook paper, felt tip pens, pencils, old magazines, etc.
2. List all instructional materials that will be used. Examples are reading textbooks, workbooks, educational puzzles, series of number cards and library books. Also list worksheets, indicating the number of sheets required for each particular group. This space may be used to indicate that a duplicating master has been made and is available. If some kind of coding or filing system notation has been devised by the teacher for storing these masters, such information should be recorded.
3. Next, list items such as newspapers, telephone books, consumer products, city maps, traffic signs--and indicate how many will be needed. Also, list such things as counting sticks, boxes of money, science experiments, individual filing boxes for spelling words, rulers, envelopes, and experience charts.
4. Indicate equipment to be used, e.g., overhead projector, tape recorder and tape, bulletin boards, easels, large tables, chalkboard.

Samples of Completed Materials and/or Equipment Listings

A. Arithmetic

Construction paper - (12" x 18") - 15 sheets

Duplicated worksheets - 15 copies (Master #A-32)

Foot rulers

Pencils

B. Unit Topic - Health

Crayons

Newsprint (12" x 18" - 12 sheets)

Ruled writing paper - 12 sheets

Scissors

Paste

Pencils

Chalkboard

C. Reading

Notebook paper

Pencils

Transparency (Family Circus Cartoon)

Overhead projector

Chalkboard

STEP 6. DIRECTIONS TO STUDENTS

Both written and verbal directions to be given to students for seatwork assignments are an integral part of independent activities and should be planned out carefully. For this reason, specific emphasis is placed on this aspect of seatwork in the planning process. In this step, consideration is directed toward finalizing the directions to be

written for each seatwork assignment, or in the case of a tape recorded activity, those directions which are included on the tape. Emphasis is also placed on planning for the teacher's verbal explanations that should accompany each activity. By making specific provisions for the planning of this aspect of seatwork development, teachers will be much better prepared to take advantage of opportunities to direct pupils in using problem solving techniques, to emphasize good work habits and to guide students in gaining self-direction and independence.

Considerations Related to Writing Directions

1. Review the seatwork activity described in Step 4. Consider what tasks the students will have to do to complete the activity.
2. Write a sentence or group of sentences which tell students how to do the activity:
    a) Keep directions as brief yet as explicit as possible.
    b) Keep in mind the reading ability of the group for whom the activity is designed. Do not use any vocabulary words the children have not mastered.
    c) Make sure the directions are listed in the order in which students are to complete the tasks. For example, if they are to read a story and then answer a series of questions on a worksheet, the directions should be:
        (1) Read the story, "A Long Day".
        (2) Read the sentences on this page.
        (3) Put the right words in the blanks.
3. If possible, plan to include a completed item as an example to help clarify the directions.

4. If you have written more than three or four sentences to explain the assignment, there are probably too many steps involved in the activity and it is too complicated. Scrutinize the activity to see if it can be simplified.

Considerations Related to Planning Verbal Explanations

1. Decide how to explain to students the purpose of the seatwork activity: what they should gain from doing it. Review the specific skill or concept being emphasized in the activity (see Step 2). Paraphrase the skill, putting it into language the students can understand, and use this as the basis for the explanation. Also tell why this is something important to learn and how students will be able to use it. Specific work habits may also be emphasized.
   a) Write down a sentence which explains the purpose.
   b) When actually explaining the purpose, teachers may not say this sentence verbatim as they have it written. Having thought it through to the point of writing it down, however, will help insure that the explanation is relevant.
2. Plan for the verbal explanation of directions that will be given for the activity.
   a) Ask students what they will have to do to complete the assignment. Have one student read the written directions out loud. Give any further verbal directions that could not be written.
   b) Ask a student to tell, in his own words, what they are supposed to do.

c) Discuss where students can get help if they need it.

d) Give directions only once.

3. It will probably not be necessary to write out these verbal explanations on the planning format. Reminders may be jotted down, however, to emphasize certain points or mention such things as modifications in directions for an individual student, instructions for copying material in a uniform manner, or giving directions for checking work.

Samples of Completed Directions to be Given to Students

A. Unit Topic - Arithmetic

Written Directions:

Read the directions and look at the pictures.

Follow the directions to make your folder.

Explain Purpose of Activity: We're doing the assignment to practice measuring something correctly with a foot ruler. You'll have to measure in inches and also parts, or fractions, of inches. This work will give you good practice in reading and following directions." Emphasize, follow the directions on the worksheet step by step.

B. Unit Topic - Health

Written Directions:

Make pictures of Tom, Sally, and Joe.

Write the names.

Write the sentences.

Explain Purpose of Activity: "We've talked about how children in our room are different sizes. This is the way it's supposed to be for grown-up people are different sizes, too. Our work today is about how children are not all the same size." Tell students to begin each sentence on a new line.

C. Reading

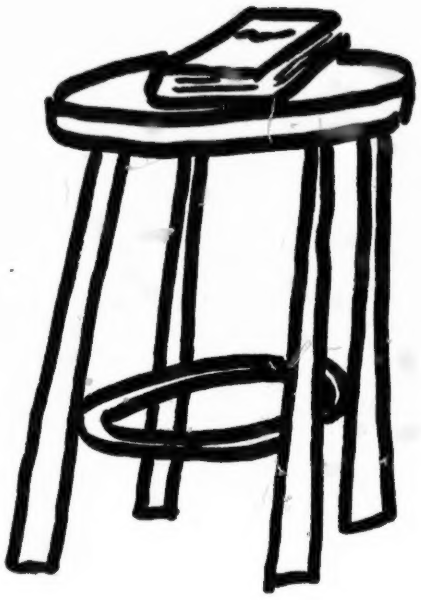
Written Directions:

Look at the cartoon.

Read and answer the sentences on the board.

Explain Purpose of Activity: "The assignment will give you practice thinking - to see if you understand what you read and see."

STEP 7. CHECKING AND CORRECTING STUDENT WORK



The information relating to the evaluation of student work to be included in the planning format concerns procedures for checking and correcting the seatwork assignment. After activities have been checked, it becomes the teacher's responsibility to evaluate each student's performance in terms of the instructional objectives for that particular activity. Subjective judgments will also be made concerning such things as work habits. Planning prior to the actual completion of the work, however, will focus on the mechanics of checking and correcting.

Considerations Related to Checking Student Work

1. Write down how the activity is to be checked. Indicate which of the following procedures will be used:

   a) Students check their own papers. Answers may be recorded on a tape recorder, answer keys posted on a bulletin board, etc.

b) Check papers in class under the direction of the teacher.

c) Hand in assignments for correction by the teacher outside of classtime.

2. Be sure that students know what procedures for checking will be used. If they are to check their own papers during the work period, indicate this when verbal directions are given.

3. If you want to record the scores students received on the assignment, keep their papers as examples of their work, or enter comments concerning this seatwork activity in an anecdotal record, this may be indicated.

Samples of Completed Plans for Checking Student Work

A. Unit Topic - Arithmetic

Compare folders with a sample posted on the bulletin board.

B. Unit Topic - Health

Check pictures in class. Discuss sentences; guide children to verbalize that differences in size are alright and to be expected.

C. Reading

Hand in papers. Rate each answer on a scale of 1 to 5; record total scores.

PART III

SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR SEATWORK PLANS

*Subject Area*______________________________*Date*__________

*Group*______________________________*Level*__________________

*Approximate Time Required*______________________________

Major Skills or Concepts to be Reinforced:

Instructional Objectives for Seatwork Activity:

Seatwork Activity:

Materials or Equip. Needed

Seatwork Activity, Continued.

Directions for Students:

Checking Student Work:

SAMPLE SEATWORK ACTIVITIES

Subject Area Arithmetic *Date* ---

Group Middle *Level* Primary

Approximate Time Required 30 minutes

Major Skills or Concepts to be Reinforced:

Reading a clock: hour and half hours.

Instructional Objectives for Seatwork Activity:

1. The students will be able to correctly mark the hours and half hours on mimeographed clock faces, given recorded instructions from the teacher.

Seatwork Activity:

Each student will have a mimeographed sheet containing 9 clock faces. They will listen to the teacher's recorded instructions and mark their worksheets accordingly.

Materials or Equip. Needed

Tape recorder

Worksheets

Pencils

Answer key

Directions for Students:

The directions to be recorded are:

1. Draw hands on clock face #1 to show 3 o'clock.
2. On Clock #2, draw hands to show 12:30.
3. Clock #3 should show 1:00 o'clock.
4. Can you make Clock #4 show 6:00?
5. Draw hands for Clock #5 so that it says 9:00 o'clock.
6. On Clock #6, draw hands to show 7:30.
7. Clock #7 should show 11:00. Can you do this?
8. How can you make clock #8 show noon?
9. Do you know what time you get out of school? Show this on Clock #9.

Purpose:

"It is very important to be able to read a clock and be able to tell what time it is. If you can read a clock, you will know how much time you have to get someplace or to finish your work. Today I'm handing out some worksheets which show clock faces without any hands. You will be given instructions on the recorder on how to fill in these clock faces. Listen carefully and be sure to make your long hands and short hands the right size so that you can tell them apart."

Checking Student Work:

Post answer sheets on a bulletin board. Students are to check their own work.

Subject Area Arithmetic *Date* ---

Group High *Level* Primary

Approximate Time Required 30 minutes

Major Skills or Concepts to be Reinforced:

1. Identification of 1¢, 5¢, 10¢, 25¢, & 50¢ coins.

Instructional Objectives for Seatwork Activity:

1. Given actual coins, the students will be able to correctly identify pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters, and 50 cent pieces.

Seatwork Activity:

Give each student a supply of coins and a mimeographed chart containing 5 rows down and across. Have the vertical rows labeled with drawings of the coins being used (or real coins may be taped on). The students will follow directions recorded by the teacher. These sentences are:

1. Place all your pennies in the row labeled with a penny.
2. Place your quarters in the proper row.
3. One of the rows is labeled with a dime. Place all your dimes in this row.
4. Can you find the nickel row? Place your nickels here.
5. The largest coin on your sheet is the 50¢ piece. Find it and place your 50¢ pieces under the one you find.

Materials or Equip. Needed

Tape recorder

Oaktag charts

Coins: pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters, half dollars.

Directions for Students:

(To be recorded)

"I am going to tell you to put your money in special places on your cards. Listen carefully so you'll know what to do."

Purpose:

"We're going to do our work today to help us learn about money. If you know what each coin, or piece of money, is worth you'll know how much money you need to buy a sucker or something.

Checking Student Work:

Children are to check their completed charts with an answer sheet available in a box next to the recorder.

CHART FOR COIN ACTIVITIES

1¢	5¢	10¢	25¢	50¢

Subject Area Safety *Date* ----

Group Jane, Allen, and Vickie *Level* Intermediate

Time 30 minutes

Major Skills or Concepts to be Reinforced:

1. Correct application of appropriate safety rules in the following situations: crossing streets; playing with matches or scissors; finding medicine bottles or bottles of unknown content.

Instructional Objectives for Seatwork Activity:

1. The students will be able to verbally describe appropriate behavior to recorded questions asking for application of safety rules in specific situations.

Seatwork Activity:

Students will listen to the teacher's questions on the tape recorder which call for specific safety rules. Each question will be directed to one of the students by calling his name after the question. Allow a long pause on the tape, during which the child is to record his ideas about what should be done in the situation. The recording will then give the correct answer, repeating the question as a statement.

1. Q: When you are going to cross a street, what safety rules should you follow?
   A: When you are crossing the street you should stop, look, and listen.
2. Q: If you find a box or folder of matches

Materials or Equip. Needed

Tape recorder

Seatwork Activity (Continued)

lying around, what should you do?

A. If you find matches lying around, put them away or give them to Mother.

3. Q: If you are helping Mother burn leaves, what should you do when you strike the match?

   A: Before you strike a match, always close the box or match folder so you won't make the rest of the matches burn.

4. Q: What should you do if you find some medicine bottles around the house?

   A: If you find medicine, give it to Mother to put away. You should never eat or drink any medicine unless Mother gives it to you.

5. Q: What should you do when you find some sharp scissors on the living room floor?

   A: If you find scissors, put them away where they belong. Never run with scissors or poke anyone with them.

Directions for Students:

(To be recorded)

I'm going to ask a question and then say one of your names. The person I name should answer the question and record it. Then listen to the tape and I will give the right answer before I ask another question.

Purpose:

"We've learned about safety rules because we need to know and follow them so we won't get hurt or killed. Today we'll see if you remember some important safety rules we've talked about."

Purpose (Continued)

Make sure students know how to run the recorder so they can both listen and record their answers.

Checking Student Work:

Listen to recording for answers.

Subject Area Arithmetic *Date* ---

Group Entire Class *Level* Intermediate

Time 45 minutes

Major Skills or Concepts to be Reinforced:

1. Read a road map to determine distances between various points.
2. Compute time required to travel between places.

Instructional Objectives for Seatwork Activity:

The students will be able to combine arithmetic and map-reading skills to successfully solve three written problems involving distance and time.

Seatwork Activity:

Give each student an Iowa road map. Present three problems on a worksheet, leaving plenty of space between each problem for computing the answer.

1. How many miles is it from Ames to Marshalltown?
2. How many hours would it take to reach Marshalltown from Ames, going 60 miles per hour?
3. You leave Ames at 8:00 a.m. You stop at Grundy Center for 30 minutes. You stop at Parkersburg for 60 minutes. You are travelling 60 miles per hour. What time will you reach Cedar Falls?

Materials or Equip. Needed

13 Iowa road maps

Worksheets

Pencils

Overhead projector

Transparency of a section of Iowa road map

Directions for Students:

1. Read and do the problems.
2. Use your map.
3. Draw a circle around your answer on the worksheet.

Purpose:

"Today's assignment will give you practice in reading a road map, and at the same time, give you practice in figuring out how far it is to different places on the map. Also, you will be figuring how much time it will take to get from one town to another - so you have several different kinds of things to do. Read the questions very well and be careful when you look at the map."

Checking Student Work:

Work problems out on the board while children check their papers. Use a transparency of the section of the map in question to point out the various locations.

Subject Area Citizenship *Date* ---

Group Entire Class *Level* Intermediate

Time 45 minutes

Major Skills or Concepts to be Reinforced:

1. Understanding that a good citizen has respect for public property.

Instructional Objectives for Seatwork Activity:

1. Students will be able to list in writing at least five ways a person can show respect for public property. Not writing on restroom walls, public buildings, fences or sidewalks; always throwing trash in a trash can; not picking flowers in parks or from street decorations; not taking items which are on display or available for public use; using park playground equipment with care will be accepted as satisfactory answers.

Seatwork Activity:

Have the children write at least five ways a person can be a good citizen by showing respect for public property. Have the children choose two items from their lists, and draw pictures to illustrate these items.

Materials or Equip. Needed

Chalkboard

Notebook paper

Pencils

Newsprint (15 sheets)

Colors

Bulletin board

Directions for Students:

(To be written on the board)

1. Write five sentences that tell how people can be good citizens by using public property the right way.
2. Pick out two sentences and draw pictures about them.

Purpose:

"For several days we have been discussing how we can be good citizens - we have talked about how people feel and things they do if they are a good citizen. This activity is to help you organize your ideas on how a good citizen should act toward public property. Your work will go on our bulletin board."

Checking Student Work:

Students are to put illustrations on the bulletin board when they are completed. The written lists are to be handed in to the teacher.

Subject Area Social Studies *Date* ----

Group Entire Class *Level* Intermediate

Time 20 minutes

Major Skills or Concepts to be Reinforced:

1. Know the names of streets surrounding the school in a 2-block radius and where stop lights are located.
2. Know the names of important buildings near the school: drug store, restaurant, police station.

Instructional Objectives for Seatwork Activity:

1. Given a map of the area surrounding the school (2 block radius), the students will be able to write in the correct names of streets and mark the intersections which have stop lights. They may use a scale model of this area as a guide.
2. The students will be able to label on the map the important buildings located in this 2-block radius.

Seatwork Activity:

The students will be given duplicated maps of the areas surrounding the school in a 2-block radius. The students will fill in the names of streets and important buildings and will mark the intersections that have stop lights. They may use a scale model of the area (which they had previously constructed as a class project) as a guide.

Materials or Equip. Needed

Duplicated maps

Felt tip pens

Overhead projector

Transparency of the completed map

Directions for the Students:

(Write on the board)

1. Write the names of the streets on the map.
2. Write the names of all the buildings.
3. Mark the corners that have stop lights with a red X.

Purpose:

"We're doing this work today for review; to see how well you know the area that's around our school. See if you can fill in your maps without looking at the model. However, if you need help, you may go look at it."

Checking Student Work:

Project a completed map on the overhead projector; students are to compare maps.

Subject Area Budgeting *Date* ---

Group Entire Class *Level* Senior High

Approximate Time Required 60 minutes

Major Skills or Concepts to be Reinforced:

Apply the concept of budgeting to food purchasing.

Instructional Objectives for the Activity:

1. To be able to compile an economical grocery list for 3 member and 6 member families for a 2 week period, using grocery advertisements in the newspaper.

Seatwork Activity:

Each student will have a newspaper. They may choose any grocery store ad. On the chalkboard list certain essential items such as bread, milk, eggs, and at least two kinds of meat they must buy. Anything else is left to their discretion. They will make out grocery lists for 3 and 6 member families for a 2 week period. When they have completed this activity, they can compare lists and see who has the most well-rounded selection for the least cost.

Materials or Equip. Needed

16 newspapers

paper

pencils

chalkboard

Directions:

1. Make grocery lists for a 3 member and a 6 member family, for a 2-week period.
2. You must buy milk, bread, eggs, and at least 2 kinds of meat.
3. Anything else you buy is up to you. You may use any grocery-store ad.

Purpose:

Knowing how to budget your money will be one of the most useful skills you have when you are on your own and earning a living. Food takes a lot of money. To be able to shop wisely for groceries can cut down food costs. Today I want you to see how good you are at being a wise shopper. You all have newspapers --you may choose any ad -check them to see which store has the best bargains. Make out grocery lists for the two different sized families. When you have completed your lists, we will compare them in class, and see who has the most well-rounded selection for the least cost.

Subject Area Vocational Training *Date* ----

Group Entire Class *Level* Senior High

Time 45 minutes

Major Skills or Concepts to be Reinforced:

Knowing proper work habits and attitudes required for any job; neatness, promptness, honesty, ability to get along with people.

Instructional Objectives for Seatwork Activity:

Students will be able to depict both good and poor work habits in a series of drawings.

Seatwork Activity:

Students will pick two work habits from a list of four on the board. Draw "Before" and "After" cartoon-type pictures for the two habits. One picture should depict a poor worker; the second picture should show how that person changed to become a good worker.

Write these words and phrases on the board:

neatness
promptness
honesty
ability to get along with people

Materials or Equip. Needed

Chalkboard
Newsprint
Drawing pencils

Directions for Students:

(Written on board)

1. Pick out two work habits.
2. Draw "Before" and "After" cartoons for both habits.

Purpose:

"Through our discussions we have come to realize how important it is to develop good work habits, no matter what our job may be. In the assignment today you are to show what a difference good work habits make."

Checking Student Work:

Display and discuss cartoons during class time.

Subject Area Housing *Date* --

Group Entire class *Level* Senior High

Approximate Time Required 60 minutes

Major Skills or Concepts to be Reinforced:

1. Making judgments concerning an apartment location

Instructional Objectives for the Activity:

1. Given a city map, the students will be able to list in writing the advantages and disadvantages of 2 apartment building locations, considering their relationship to work sites, shopping centers, schools.

Seatwork Activity:

Each student will be given a city map - these will have been marked previously during class discussions. Each student will choose any 2 apartment locations, and write a paper discussing the advantages and disadvantages of each of these locations in relation to work sites, shopping centers, and schools.

Materials or Equip. Needed

18 city maps

Chalkboard

Notebook paper

Pencils

Directions for Students:

(Write on the board).

Using your map, find 2 apartment locations and write a paper which tells about the advantages and disadvantages of these apartments. Think about things like work sites, shopping centers, schools.

Purpose:

The past few days we have been discussing the problems involved in finding a place to live, and the many things you have to think about. Soon you will be out in the world earning a living and raising a family. It is important that you know how to find a suitable home. Suppose you are moving to a new city and you are looking for an apartment. This is your problem for today. Find 2 apartment locations on your maps and write down what is good about each location, and what is bad in relation to the three items on the board. Study your maps carefully, and give serious consideration to your discussion.

Checking Student Work:

Discuss papers in class.

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TEACHER EVALUATION

SECDC SEATWORK PUBLICATION

Criteria & Suggestions for Seatwork:

*Yes*____ *No*____ Helpful *Yes*____ *No*____ Relevant

*Yes*____ *No*____ Clearly Presented

Directives for Planning & Preparatory Steps:

*Yes*____ *No*____ Helpful *Yes*____ *No*____ Relevant

Suggested Format for Seatwork Plans:

*Yes*____ *No*____ Helpful *Yes*____ *No*____ Easy to Use

Additional Evaluative Comments:

SECDC
IOWA